

MELBOURNE.

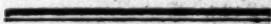
A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES,



BY

THE AUTHOR OF DELORAINE.

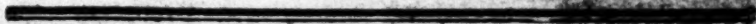


Fortune sometimes assumes a rugged brow,
But to endear her smiles, and make the turn
More welcome to us, as 'tis unexpected. —
How sweet is rest after a toilsome day !
How pleasant light after a length of darkness !
How relishing good fortune after ill !

HAVARD,



VOL. III.



L O N D O N :

PRINTED AT THE

Minerva-Press,

FOR WILLIAM LANE, LEADENHALL-STREET.

1798.

MELBOURN

A NOVEL

IN THREE VOLUMES

—

THE AUTHOR OF 'THE GARDEN'

London: Printed by J. G. & J. S. B. at the
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MELBOURNE.

CHAP. I.

PREFATORY.

AN author is, perhaps, in some respects, exposed to more inconveniences than any other class of mortals; and yet surely there must be some undescribable charm in authorship, or the multitude of writers would not daily increase upon us, when the trade is so much vilified by all who are not free of Parnassus. What can be the universal principle

which inspires so many people with the fury of writing? What can induce so many modest, well-meaning persons to face a whole army of railers, critics, sneerers, wits, contemners, libellers, with *et ceteras ad infinitum*, armed only with a single quill, far less effectually formidable than those which Nature has so liberally bestowed upon the porcupine? What infatuation first induces a man to pour forth the painfully-matured conceptions of his brain on the unoffending paper? to assist, with watchful care, the dubious birth? to attend, with unremitting assiduity, to the growth and education of this darling offspring? and then, all at once, to send forth this cherished child of his fancy, exposed to all the dangers and hostilities of an adverse world, ready to quarrel and find fault with any one who assumes the smallest degree of superiority over others, though ever so well inclined to exert that superiority merely for their amusement and edification. The general principle, supposed by the uncandid world, is vanity; a feeling so universal, that the

the beau and the philosopher, the statesman and the fine lady, the politician and the disputant, the projector and the clown, are as much actuated by it as the unhappy author.

Shenstone says, that a man sooner finds out his own foibles in another person than any other foibles. This must surely be the reason why every body is so ready to accuse others of vanity. The internal consciousness of that busy restless feeling induces every one to suppose its existence in their neighbours; and yet, surely, it would be natural to shew a little more charity and indulgence for a failing so similar to our own, rather than to hunt it down with violent malice and unceasing asperity; it is so harmless to others, and conduces so much to one's own peculiar satisfaction, that surely a better object might be found for universal disapprobation, or at least every one be careful to be angry only with that species of vanity which might interfere with his own pretensions. The statesman can have no cause to

quarrel with the vanity of the beau, nor the fine lady with that of the author; their interests can never clash: let them keep their animosities for each other, and not cruelly and wantonly hunt down a fellow-creature for aspiring to an eminence which themselves would disdain. Of all persons, the living author, who presumes to offer his works to the public, is, perhaps, the most obnoxious to universal hostility;—that he dares pretend to amuse, to instruct, to arrogate to himself more knowledge, fancy, wit, or sentiment than his brethren, is an unpardonable offence; and every blockhead who can only just spell the words, and put them together, thinks himself qualified to criticise the work, of which, perhaps, he understands not a syllable. If his wisdom finds it tiresome, he condemns it as tedious, and, with a thousand unmeaning cant phrases, stamps an odium on the book, which is too apt to accompany it through its whole career. Good people, pray recollect that an author writes more to ease an over-teeming brain, than to amuse
and

and instruct the public; and if it be true, as moralists universally allow, that employment is necessary to happiness, there can need no excuse for writing a book. If the maxims of virtue be not violated in the sentiments it contains, it is at least an interesting employment to the author, even if merely a work of amusement; and it is always possible, even in fictitious narratives, to interweave some principles, some examples, some reflections, which may render it in some degree useful to the reader. Perhaps it may be found, in the use of books, as well as in most circumstances of life, that we may be more struck with an observation in a place where it was not so much to be expected, than if it were found in those treatises dedicated solely to purposes of improvement. A rose in a garden is ever a lovely object; but how much more lovely is a rose on a heath? So, when we take up a novel with no other view than to pass away an hour of languor or of idleness, in pursuing the incidents of a story,

tious narrative through a variety of singular vicissitudes, we may, perhaps, find our attention arrested, and our feelings impressed, by reflections arising out of the chain of circumstances, yet unexpected in a book of mere amusement.

We historical writers have three extensive fields to rove in—those of Truth, Fiction, and Verisimilitude. The first fears no common cant of unnatural—impossible—low—unmeaning—sentimental; the facts of historical truth must remain undisputed; at least, perhaps not in three centuries, will there arise a genius fine enough to doubt, or curious enough to inquire into the proofs of those facts on which history is founded. The personages introduced upon that great scene are too exalted to be capable of any low actions, or unmeaning projects; and sentiment—alas! doth it enter into the heart of an historian to imagine the smallest shade of sentiment? his plan is too vast for the censure, or even for the comprehension of common minds; and people in general read history as
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they read a newspaper, with no more idea of cavilling at the arrangement either of facts or words, of matter or ideas, than if such circumstances entered not at all into the merit of the book.

Of absolute fiction, what can be said? Subject to no laws, roving in airy fields, above all human ken, the ingenuity of the fabulist is often not to be perceived by common apprehensions; his allusions are so fine as to escape the million, or so very fine as not to be perceptible to any one; or else, perhaps, he has no allusions at all, and wanders, without end or aim, in those monstrous regions productive of

“Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimeras dire.”

MILTON.

Of all historical writers, therefore, we biographers of imaginary persons, who are obliged to keep verisimilitude in view, are the most exposed to universal criticism. As the very clown can tell, that if your handkerchief is in your pocket, you cannot
A 4. apply

apply it to your nose without pulling it thence; so every observer knows, that if your hero is not fed, he must, like Jane Shore, die of want, and is capable of drawing similar conclusions. Were I, however, to tell these critics, that they all know an effect produced must have an adequate cause, they perhaps would stare and affirm they knew no such thing; yet they all know perfectly well that they cannot see to read at midnight without the aid of artificial light. Of the common occurrences of life, then, every one is qualified to judge; and as we deal (or ought to deal) only in the common occurrences of life, we are certainly peculiarly liable to universal criticism. For us was combined that formidable phalanx of decisive phrases, which stamp indelible characters on books; 'tis we who tremble at those awful words,—unnatural—impossible—low—tedious—romantic! yet no class of writers is so universally read. The learned labours of the philosopher are consigned to the study of some college book-worm, or left

left to decorate the shelf of the bookseller; the historian of empires is read by statesmen and children; the fabulous histories of heathen gods and fairies by children only; but the novelist flutters in every hand, from the palace to the cottage; is studied by every age, from infancy to second dotage; accompanies the lawyer on his circuit, the physician on his rounds, the parson to his fishing-seat, the lady to her toilette, and the stern philosopher to that sacred retirement where Lord Chesterfield gravely counsels his son to pursue some light and amusing study;—yet though every one finds amusement from our pages of interesting adventures, though we are seldom laid aside till the conclusion of difficulties places the hero or heroine in a state of future quiescence, yet every one seems to read only with a view to criticise and cavil. Tell me, gentle reader, does not this eternal cavilling shew as great a disposition to vanity in thee as the poor author betrays, who, in the simplicity and generous confidence of his heart, throws himself on

your mercy, exposes to your cool and deliberate judgment all those faults which might have escaped himself in the hurry of composition, and humbly submits his performance, "with all its imperfections on its head," to that severe tribunal, from whose decisions there lies no appeal.

CHAP. II.

PERPLEXITIES.

WHEN Howard and Melbourne arose in the morning, they inquired for Lord Aubrey, who they found had returned to the inn about half an hour after they retired, and was then waiting breakfast for them. He told them he had met with a companion for his post-chaise, but that he should not set out

out till the middle of the day, again offering to either of them the third place in the chaise, which they again declined; and after breakfast, the two friends sallied out together, in order to finish some part of the business of the concert, and shook hands with De Vere, who, however, told them he should see them on their return, as they were to get a hasty dinner at the inn previous to their return to Cambridge. Their first business led them to the widow's house; and the delicate bloom that overspread Maria's cheek, who received them alone, confirmed Melbourne in his conjecture. Howard too, now unengaged, and less full of rattle, shewed his entire devotion to her in his look; and Melbourne felt a pang of regret at the incongruity that struck him in a candidate for holy orders marrying a woman who had exhibited her talents in public.

As neither Mrs. nor Miss Shelley appeared, the whole business fell upon Maria, and she thanked Howard for the interest he took in her affairs, and for the trouble he had

given himself, with a graceful gratitude that added new charms to her lovely countenance; and as they walked together away from the house, Melbourne told his friend the result of his observations, and Howard acknowledged even more than Melbourne had imagined. "Yes, my friend," said he, "my happiness is indeed entrusted to the keeping of Maria, and you know not how completely. Maria is my wife—we were united yesterday; but a consciousness of a slight degree of impropriety which our stiff superiors might attach to a student in theology marrying a girl whom they would call a public sinner, has induced us to keep our marriage private till after I shall have taken orders, and been installed in the benefice destined for me by my friends;—till that time we shall meet only as friends; for you may perceive that we do not even appear as avowed lovers, though your eagle eyes discovered our secret.

Melbourne wished his friend all possible happiness; and they continued talking over each

each other's future plans in the intervals of the business Howard had to transact, and which had carried them into the country at some few miles distance from the town, so that it was much later than they had intended when they returned to the inn for their hasty dinner. They found that Lord Aubrey had been gone some hours, and that he had put four horses to the chaise.

Before they returned to Cambridge, Howard persuaded his friend to accompany him to take one more farewell of Maria; and they accordingly went to Mrs. Shelley's house, which they found in the utmost confusion; and Mrs. Shelley came down with an air inflamed by anger, and said, "Mr. Howard, I really suspected you; but some of your young companions have carried off Maria."

"Carried off!" said Howard—"carried off Maria!"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Shelley, "she was seen some hours ago in a post-chaise and four with a young gentleman."

"Some

"Some hours ago!" exclaimed Howard; "Is any one gone in pursuit of her? On what road was she seen?"

"Nay, Mr. Howard, I do not know," said the enraged dame; "I never asked what road, for I had nobody to send after her; but the baggage shall never enter these doors again, I swear."

Howard's agony was extreme; but Melbourne, who found that their marriage was yet a secret to Mrs. Shelley, endeavoured to keep him quiet, and offered his services to follow, and if possible to recover and bring back the young lady.

"And to what purpose, Sir, should you do that?" said the amiable parent; "she's as safe with one of your kidney as with another; and as I give her up for ever, I see no use in any body's running all the world over after her to bring her back."

"Come along," said Howard, seizing Melbourne's arm, unable any longer to bear the vociferation of Mrs. Shelley's rage, which

which vented itself in abusing and cursing the whole race of Cantabs.

The moment they were in the street, Howard exclaimed, "My life on Maria's truth! Melbourne, I must instantly pursue her—will you accompany me?"

Melbourne agreed, for he feared to trust this hot-headed young man alone.

"And what measures," said Howard, "can we take? Who is it probable has trepanned away my angel? Can it be Lord Aubrey?"

"The suspicion glanced immediately across my mind," said Melbourne, "for he evidently admired her very much."

"Then we must pursue them to London; must we not?" said Howard.

"I should imagine," replied Melbourne, "Lord Aubrey would never have furnished us with such a clue."

"He knew not of my pretensions," remarked Howard.

"Only as I did," observed Melbourne, "but he knew of your friendship with the mother,

mother, and might readily suppose you would be employed."

"True," said Howard; "how shall we decide?"

It was, however, necessary to decide immediately; and some further intelligence they received, determined them to bend their course towards London. It was late in the day ere they could set forward, and evening overtook them before they had proceeded many miles;—it was not darkness, however, that could impede their progress; and they hurried on so fast, that at last a wheel flew off the chaise, and they were overturned. The post-boy, unable immediately to stop the horses, they continued dragging the carriage along for some distance; and when at length they were stopped, poor Howard was terribly bruised; and, in attempting to rise, discovered that his shoulder was dislocated, and his leg broken. They were at some distance from any town, and the difficulty of conveying the poor mangled knight-errant to any house was extreme.

treme. The nearest habitation they arrived at was a cottage by the road side, where only very indifferent accommodations could be procured, and from whence Melbourne sent the postillion at his utmost speed to fetch a surgeon;—in the meanwhile Howard besought his friend not to desist from the pursuit, and received from him the only promise that could calm his mind, that he would not relinquish the attempt till he had obtained some news of Maria.

The pain poor Howard suffered was excruciating; and Melbourne, who, among his other studies, had attended anatomical and chirurgical lectures, offered his assistance to restore the shoulder to its place. Howard thankfully accepted it; and Melbourne, with a happy dexterity, performed the operation, and eased his friend of half his pain. As soon as the surgeon arrived, Howard told him that he could no way so much oblige him as by hastening forward on their intended business; and as the postillion had dragged the shattered chaise and horses towards

wards the town they had left, Melbourne had no resource but that of walking forwards on the road towards London;—in order, therefore, to allay the ferment in poor Howard's mind, which the surgeon wished to be kept as easy as possible, Melbourne departed on foot, in the middle of the night, without knowing whither it would be most prudent to guide his steps, and at an hour when he could obtain no information from the inns he should pass; yet he consoled himself with the reflection that he was thus active in the cause of innocence and virtue, and he walked forward with a brisk and vigorous step. In the silence of the night, while his body was thus actively employed, his mind wandered over a thousand interesting subjects, and he contemplated, with mixed emotions of hope and fear, the undistinguishable prospect of his future life. Every reflection, every wish, wherever it began, terminated in Julia Dalrymple: he thought of her, exposed to the ribaldry of Trebison, and blamed himself for thinking of rescuing any woman but her.

Then again, he reflected that she had declined his assistance, and had declared herself competent to her own relief: he felt that the conduct he was now pursuing would be pleasing to her, and his tread became more elastic. He had proceeded several miles, when the rising dawn shewed him a town, from whence he determined to procure a speedy conveyance to London, after he should have obtained all possible intelligence. Of intelligence, however, he could glean but little, and that of a nature to unsettle his plans. Two such couples as he described had the preceding day changed horses at that inn;—one of them proceeded towards London, the other went a cross country road; and, by some accident or other, the postillion who drove them was not yet returned. Melbourne concluded these to be the objects of his pursuit; but the quantity of baggage they had with them militated against this idea; and he determined to proceed towards London; where he was conscious concealment might be more completely obtained than in any country

country place whatever. To London, therefore, he ordered his chaise to proceed;—there was yet one intermediate stage; and he there learnt that a gentleman and lady, such as he described, had changed horses there the preceding evening, and had been put into a hackney-coach at Charing-cross. Here, then, all clue was lost; and Melbourne, in desperation, proceeded to town, where he determined to wander as long as any chance of procuring information subsisted, though he was totally ignorant where to apply, and felt as if roving about in a pathless wilderness without a guide. In the course of a very few days, his borrowed cash was exhausted, and he was now more than ever at a loss; to remain in town, or to return to Cambridge, were equally desperate measures; and though it was very near the vacation, he could not bear the thoughts either of going to Mayfield, or of making his distress known to Mr. Searle:—he was well aware that that excellent man would deny himself every thing but bare necessities to supply his wants; and

and burthensome as he had long been on a liberality of temper unequalled, he could not support the idea of outrunning his allowance. He was also very averse to relinquish his pursuit, though it was scarcely possible that, after a lapse of so many days, Maria could be reinstated in Howard's confidence and esteem; and to stay in London without money, was involving himself still deeper in distress, without the chance of assisting his friend;—even were he fortunate enough to discover Maria, and to find her still worthy of Howard's affection, money would be necessary to enable him to withdraw her from Lord Aubrey; for with him he had no doubt but that she would be found. He determined, therefore, to devote one more day to the search, and then to return to Cambridge, informing Howard by the way of his fruitless endeavours to serve him. In the morning, which was fine, Melbourne went to saunter in the park, which, even at this late season, was tolerably full of company. He gazed almost rudely in the face of every woman

man he met, but he found not the lovely features he sought; and was going to leave the park, despairing of ever succeeding, when he felt his arm grasped by some one behind him; and turning round, beheld Lord Aubrey de Vere. Melbourne's blood rushed indignantly to his face; but, before he could speak, De Vere said jocularly, "So, Melbourne, you had a good reason for refusing to accompany me to London; you chose a lovelier companion: Faith, it is not your choice; but your secrecy I blame. Maria is indeed a captivating girl; but how could you contrive to win her so speedily?"

The language of nature spoke eloquently in Melbourne's countenance during this harangue; but, when Lord Aubrey ceased, he was unable for a moment to articulate a word. At length he said, with a faltering voice, "Maria! Good God! is she not with you?"

"With me!" repeated Lord Aubrey, "that's a good hit! but you will not get off so, Melbourne; no, no, I am not so lucky as
to

to win the dear little charmer so suddenly; but who the deuce would have suspected your philosophy of such a trick?"

"And, for heaven's sake!" said Melbourne, "how came I to be suspected of it?"

"Oh! the report is pretty general, I assure you, and so circumstantial, it will be sure to gain credit. The mother's distress at the elopement of her daughter, has made the whole town ring; and they say, moreover, that Howard had promised to marry the girl, and that he pursued you, and came up with you; that you fought, and wounded him severely, and left him at an inn on the road while you escaped with your prize. I hope, Melbourne, you mean to make the girl all the reparation in your power; I hope you mean to marry her—she is really a devilish fine girl."

"How will it ever be possible," said Melbourne, thoughtfully, "to clear up this mistake? In the whole account you have given me, my Lord, truth is so blended with false-

hood,

hood, that though I shall readily clear myself to your candid mind, it will be difficult to set all those right who have heard this cruel report. In the first place, let me assure you, that Maria's elopement was known before Howard and I left the place; that we concluded you were the culprit, and determined to rescue the hapless girl; but, in our way to London, the chaise broke down, and Howard was left extremely bruised, and with a broken leg at an inn on the road. I have been ever since in town, vainly searching for Maria, and meant to carry the ill news to my friend to-morrow."

"No man ever knew where to find what he wished to conceal," replied Lord Aubrey, "though it was locked up in a chamber, and he had the key in his pocket. However, I acknowledge you have arranged your story ingeniously enough; it is a pity it won't take me in."

"Good heaven! my Lord," said Melbourne, with some warmth, "is it possible you do not believe me?"

"A

"A little deceit, my friend," said Lord Aubrey, "is allowable in affairs of this kind; though I must own I think Howard has reason to be angry with you, who professed so much friendship for him, for stealing away his intended."

"What can I say," cried Melbourne, earnestly, "to divest you of this cruel prepossession."

"Nothing you can say," replied Lord Aubrey, smiling, "can possibly have that power; but do not concern yourself, my friend; every man who ever saw Maria Shelley would envy your situation, though it were sure to draw down vengeance more formidable than Howard's."

"You can only be joking," said Melbourne.

"I never was more serious in my life, I protest," replied De Vere.

"And will you," said Melbourne, seriously, and upon your honour, affirm that you know nothing about Maria Shelley?"

"I might dispute your right to question me," said Lord Aubrey, coolly; but I will answer you seriously, and upon my honour, I do not know where Maria Shelley is; and to prove to you that I bear you no ill-will, though I really was struck with the girl's appearance, I will make you a friendly offer; you have been some days in London, and one cannot live in town for nothing, will you allow me once more to be your banker?"

Melbourne started and paused; at length he said, "I thank you, my Lord; but—no—"

He could not wholly conquer the suspicion that Maria was seduced from her home by Lord Aubrey; and he could not bear the thoughts of increasing his obligations to a man whom he knew or suspected capable of such conduct. Before they parted, however, De Vere engaged Melbourne's promise to dine with him—a proposal which he accepted, because he hoped to be able, by some means or other, to gain some further information respecting the unfortunate Maria.

CHAP. III.

CONSEQUENCES.

MELBOURNE met a numerous party of young men of rank and fashion at Lord Aubrey's table, and had the happiness of hearing the false report about himself and Maria repeated all round the party : they all gave him credit for his ingenuity in the manner in which he related the facts, and one and all congratulated him upon the possession of so fine a girl. * Melbourne could not doubt but he had been invited there to be insulted, though it was done in a manner which precluded him from shewing any resentment,

though the emotions that arose in his bosom were unusually keen. At a very early hour he took his leave, and firmly resisted all entreaties to stay; he felt yet unconvinced of Lord Aubrey's innocence, and was disposed to believe him the real actor of the guilt falsely imputed to himself. As Lord Aubrey's present lodgings were in a hotel, Melbourne thought himself entitled to make some enquiries in the house, but obtained no information; yet, as he left it, he perceived a little girl, who seemed the daughter of the mistress of the house, watching him with looks of the most eager attention; and when he was about to depart, her expressive countenance seemed labouring to impart to him some secret which she feared to communicate by word of mouth: her little gestures and expressive manners were not lost on Melbourne, who lingered in the house till he saw the mistress move away from her seat on some business; and then hastening to the little girl, she said in a low voice, "Is your

name Howard, Sir? if it is, the lady bade me tell you she has escaped."

"And where is she, my dear?" said Melbourne, extremely agitated.

"Here is a letter for you," said the child; "but do not let my mother see—here she comes."

Melbourne concealed the letter, and walked away; but the keen-eyed mother perceived him, and questioned the child what he had said to her. She made some frivolous reply, and Melbourne taking the hint, returned, and said something further in the same trifling way, which quieted the suspicions of the landlady. He now wished to loiter yet longer to gain some further information from the little girl; but her keen eyes bade him depart, and he quitted the house. In possession of a letter intended for Howard, he felt distressed by his impatience; that letter probably informed him where she had found an asylum, and to have such intelligence, and yet be precluded from making use of it, agitated him with a thousand emotions.

tions. He stopped near a solitary lamp to observe the direction of the letter, and found it was neither sealed nor directed: he then thought himself justified in reading it, and opening it, just made out the following words:—

“If you have still confidence enough in me to think me worthy of pursuit, seek me at Mrs. Trueford’s, Paddington.

“M. H.”

This plain unvarnished note, evidently written in haste, brought home to Melbourne’s heart full conviction that Maria was yet innocent; and late as it grew, he resolved to go to Paddington that night, lest any new accident should happen to the lovely Maria. When he arrived there, however, he found it impossible to do any service that night: the whole village was gone to repose; and it was with difficulty he gained admittance into a little alehouse, which he entered merely to avoid the persecutions of the watchmen. Heavily

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and slowly passed the hours till the morning was sufficiently advanced to allow him to pursue his inquiries; and then, with eager haste, he inquired for Mrs. Trueford's, and found her a decent old woman, who earned a scanty livelihood by keeping a little school. In the days of their prosperity, she had been servant in Mrs. Shelley's family, and in the heaviest adversity that had ever befallen her, Maria sought shelter under her roof. It was with great difficulty Melbourne could obtain from the faithful creature an acknowledgment that Maria was in her house;—he indeed confessed honestly that his name was not Howard—the only name to which Maria had consented to be revealed; and it was not till the impressive sincerity of his manners and countenance had won the old woman's heart, that she consented to inform Maria of his being there, or, indeed, that she confessed any knowledge at all of the young lady. At length she agreed to call her down; but by the length of time that Melbourne was left to himself to admire the arrangement of the

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the china in the beaufet, it seemed as if the young lady was very unwilling to appear; and, indeed, after a very tedious stay, the old woman once more entered without her, and said, Maria remembered the name of Melbourne as the friend of Howard—she also remembered him as the friend of De Vere;—how was she to ascertain his fidelity? This was a question Melbourne found it difficult to answer satisfactorily; and he wrote with a pencil on the back of her own letter—“Howard would not have entrusted to another the sacred commission I bear, but that he is prevented by an accident which confines him, and he is now suffering agonies in his mind till my return to him; what will he not suffer if I return without his wife?” The last word brought Maria instantly to him, convinced that only to a real friend Howard would have trusted the secret of their marriage; she flew down stairs; but so pale, so woe-worn, so emaciated, scarcely could Melbourne restrain his tears at the sight of her altered figure.

“Oh!

"Oh! Mr. Melbourne," cried she, "where is Howard, and what has happened to him?"

Melbourne briefly informed her, and a shower of tears relieved her oppressed heart.

"My situation," said she, "is painful in the extreme; Mr. Melbourne, can your friend, do you think, wish still to see the wretched Maria?"

"If Maria still wishes to return to him, my friend," said Melbourne, "I will receive her with rapture."

"I accept the test," said Maria, with energy; "it is such as a generous soul only could propose, and—"

"And such," said Melbourne, interrupting her, "as an unblemished one only could accept."

She blushed as she held out her hand to Melbourne, who pressed it to his lips, and left her to prepare a carriage for her departure. He was not long absent, and on his return found breakfast ready, of which he was pleased to see Maria partake with some other

fulness, though her anxiety for Howard perpetually suffused her eyes with tears, and prompted a thousand anxious questions. Ere they departed, Melbourne, being left alone with Mrs. Trueford, requested the loan of a little cash, assuring her it should be punctually and speedily repaid. The good old woman very readily gave him the contents of her purse, which he calculated would enable him just to restore Maria to Howard, and luckily his friend had yet in his possession some of the profits of the eventful concert. This necessary business arranged, Melbourne placed Maria in the chaise, and seating himself beside her, by the delicacy of his attentions, and the openness of his manners, soon won her entire confidence; and she thus related to him the history of her late adventure:—

“After you and Mr. Howard had left me, Mr. Melbourne, my mother sent me on an errand out into the town; which having executed, I again went out to call on a particular friend of mine, who lived at some
little

little distance. As I went I was met by Lord Aubrey, who talked to me in a very common-place stile of gallantry, which I endeavoured to repress, assuring him that my mind was not sunk with my fortunes. He now changed his tone, and begging my pardon for the offence he had committed, entreated he might be permitted to attend me on my walk, as he could assure me many of the young men were still loitering about in the town; and as they were universally struck with me, I might be subjected to more unpleasant attacks than I had experienced from him. I was now, however, at my friend's door, and thanking him slightly for his attendance, wished him good morning, and walked in;—when I came out again, I saw Lord Aubrey at a small distance, and declined his again offered arm. After I had passed him, somebody from behind me, either affecting or really being in violent haste, rushed against me with such force, that I was thrown to the ground, and stunned; for of what happened afterwards I was insensible, till I found my-

self supported in Lord Aubrey's arms in a post-chaise and four, driving rapidly along the London road, and already many miles distant from the town I had quitted. When he saw my senses returned, he endeavoured to sooth me with all the eloquence he was capable of, and with promises of the most liberal treatment. I preserved a contemptuous silence; for I despaired of effecting any good purpose by any thing I could say, or of making any laudable impression on a man who was capable of forming such a scheme. I attended very little to what he said, but was busied in contriving some plan for my escape; but he had rendered all my hopes abortive; for he had an avant-courier, who had prepared horses at every stage, so that I was wholly precluded from raising any interest at the inns. Unprepared as I was, I knew not what mode to pursue; and when I got into London, I felt convinced that any attempt to catch the attention of casual passengers would be in vain; I therefore suffered myself to be put, unresistingly, into a hackney-coach

coach at Charing-cross, which conveyed Lord Aubrey and me to a hotel. The mistress received us with fawning civility—Lord Aubrey whispered something to her, and she took me by the hand, and shewed me into a comfortable apartment, where she promised soon to send me some refreshment. Fortunately Lord Aubrey, who had been deceived by my passiveness, thought me inclined to yield; and concluding me safe, turned the key in the door on the outside, and left me to myself. I had not been long in the room before the little girl, who is, I believe, daughter to the mistress of the house, brought me some wine and water; she appeared good and clever, and I instantly ventured to tell her my story. I risked nothing by speaking openly, but I risked every thing by my silence. The child said she dared not stay then, but would soon return. I was miserable till she came, which she did with smiling looks, telling me her mother was very busy, and thought her gone to school; so now she had plenty of time to help me. I told her

that I might

I might possibly be inquired for; and if a gentleman of the name of Howard asked for me, to give him that note. The dear child was uncommonly intelligent and active; and leading me up into the garret, found means to conduct me down some back-stairs into the street, and saw me safe into a hackney coach. I gave her my direction, and begged her to write to me; I have had the pleasure to hear that she escaped unsuspected, after having rendered me the greatest, as well as the most dangerous service. I had not been in that terrible house three hours, before she enabled me to effect my liberation: I had no means of rewarding her; but such an action cannot remain unrewarded."

This simple narrative fully expunged every shadow of doubt from Melbourne's mind; good and sincere himself, he knew how to appreciate the language of sincerity;—here were no exaggerations of agonizing feeling—no attempts to blind the reason with the veil of sentiment; but her round unvarnished tale spoke in a voice of such truth and conviction, that Melbourne, unable to speak, took

took Maria's hand, and pressed it to his lips. As he withdrew it, he perceived, in a chaise just meeting them, the form of his adored Julia;—that she had witnessed the action he could not doubt; her cheek was pale, and she bowed her head coldly in return to his acknowledgment of her. Who was her companion he saw not: he was now lost in a whirl of anxiety, and he let drop the hand he had just kissed so ardently with an agitation that escaped not the apprehensive Maria, who, early taught, by painful experience, the lesson of suspicion, gazed earnestly in the face of her fellow-traveller, and observed, with painful anxiety, the rapid and unaccountable changes of his countenance. Poor Melbourne, lost to every sensation but that exquisite one the sight of Julia had raised in his bosom, perceived not the steady observation of Maria; but veiling his eyes with his hand, seemed to shut out all external objects. Maria witnessed with pain an agitation of which she knew not the cause; and when she perceived some large drops force their way down

down his varying cheek, pity and generosity overcame her apprehensions; and, in a voice of the tenderest compassion, she said, "Are you not well?" The accents recalled him to present circumstances; and checking, with one strong effort, the emotions that swelled in his bursting heart, he replied, with tolerable composure, that he was better now.

"You were ill then," repeated Maria; "you were in great pain?"

"In exquisite torture," replied Melbourne; and his countenance now gradually resuming its usual expression, Maria was satisfied, and believed that violent corporeal suffering had caused the appearances that had alarmed her delicacy. She would have pursued her inquiries, but Melbourne strove to evade them, and she readily ceased. A few hours more brought them to the inn where Howard lay, suffering more with mental anxiety than with the agony of his broken limb.

Melbourne, who had given him daily epistolary accounts of his ill success, had told him in his last letter that he proposed relinquish-
ing

ing his search, and should return to Cambridge. Howard, therefore, was prepared to see him; and Melbourne, easily discovering the very irritable state of his spirits, proceeded, with the utmost caution, in acquainting him with his recent and complete success. When Howard, however, understood that Maria was really in the house, his transports became too impetuous to be restrained; and Melbourne, finding his endeavours ineffectual to calm his friend, was obliged to call in the assistance of Maria, whose melodious voice in one instant subdued his almost delirious raptures. After the first ebullitions of delight were over, it became a subject of serious debate what should be done with Maria. Mrs. Shelley's positive refusal to admit her again into her house, deprived her of the only proper asylum; and Howard was for acknowledging her instantly as his wife, as the only means of protecting her from similar attacks, and of affording her a safe and honourable abode. Maria, who knew how much such a premature disclosure

of

of their union would cloud over her husband's future prospects, and retard his advancement, with equal generosity put a strong negative on the proposal, but had no means to offer as a substitute. Melbourne, who abhorred concealment, was strongly of opinion that the marriage should be acknowledged, and said, that his friend would be sufficiently recompensed for any disadvantage it might occasion him, by the secure possession and constant society of such a woman.

Howard, strengthened by Melbourne's concurrence, pressed his point more pertinaciously, and Maria seemed to derive an equal firmness, on the other side of the question, from the same circumstance that gave him so much additional force in his part of the argument. She represented to him in the strongest terms, the disadvantage it would be to him, either to be married at all so very early, or to avow a marriage with a person in her line of life, when he knew how much the habits of the world, she would not call them the prejudices, would condemn his choice.

choice. In all professions, it was surely, she argued, most necessary to attend to propriety of conduct in that which he had chosen; and if the general opinion went against the conduct he had adopted, however morally virtuous, or heroically generous it might be, it was in that respect virtually wrong; "wait my dear Howard," she concluded, "till your virtue and your abilities shall have set you above all censure, and then avow your early choice, and call your Maria to share your happiness; but give not to her the unceasing regret of knowing herself to be the barrier to your advancement. In the interval, she will endeavour to support herself by modes less ineligible to your future views, than that fatal exhibition of talents, which has already produced us so much disquiet, and which, though promoted by my mother and sister, never met my hearty concurrence. I will endeavour to get into some respectable family as governess, where I shall find a safe and creditable asylum, till the blessed moment when I may seek protection in the arms of my husband."

Melbourne

Melbourne was affected by Maria's manner, and partly convinced by her reasoning; and together they persuaded the reluctant Howard to consent to a yet longer separation. "Happily, my dearest Maria," said he, "I have yet in my hands part of the sum raised by the concert, which I shall certainly vest in you; your mother, by her unqualified renunciation of you, certainly means to deprive you of your share of the profits; but it is my care to prevent that." Maria begged him to appropriate it to his own use, a proposal which Howard indignantly rejected; and after a little further consultation, it was agreed, that Melbourne should convey Maria to the house of a friend, who, she knew, would shelter her till she had obtained such a situation as she wished, and then it would be necessary for him to return to Cambridge, which he could do with less regret, as Howard was rapidly recovering from the effects of his unkindness and his bruises. "I shall be with you in the arms of my husband."

CHAPTER

Melbourne

CHAP. V.

FURTHER CONSEQUENCES.

WHEN Melbourne had deposited his fair charge safely at the house of her friend Mrs. Barwood, who kept a girls' boarding school at no very great distance from the place of Howard's confinement, he abandoned his carriage, and set forward on foot for Cambridge, where he arrived the following day. His reflections on his own individual situation, were not the most pleasing—pennyless in debt, probably his character attacked by the malicious reports which Lord Aubrey would not fail to spread; these were not exhilarating subjects; but these faded into view

less points, when he recalled to his mind that he must have appeared faithless to his Julia. What though no vows of love had passed between them, nor had even the word been interchanged, Melbourne felt, and was convinced that Julia felt, they were contracted to each other by the strong, the imperceptible ties of feeling and honour; and to think that he, whose whole soul was devoted to her loved idea, should be imagined faithless for a mistake, gave him the most immitigable concern. How he was ever to have it in his power to clear up the mistake, he knew not; for of Julia's present situation he knew nothing, nor even if he could find her, dared he hope that she would condescend to hear his justification, that she would deign to assume a right to be angry with him, or to judge him. Oppressed by these ideas, his real apprehensions had vanished from his mind, nor were they recalled, until soon after he entered the town, and before he reached his own college, he was accosted by Lord Aubrey, whose voice sounded in his ears like the herald of misfortune;

fortune ; his Lordship, however, still affected the tone of friendship, and in a rallying manner asked, if he were already weary of Maria.

“ My Lord,” said Melbourne firmly, “ let me have no more of this ; I have found Maria, happily for all parties, I have found her uninjured ; I have seen her in safety, and since your purpose failed of success, I am willing it should rest in silence ; but rouse me no more.”

Lord Aubrey, no way abashed, retorted with an exulting laugh, “ I fancy, Mr. Melbourne, you would indeed be glad if the business could rest in silence ; you will find to your sorrow that it will not ; but in the meanwhile, as my excursion to London has drained my pocket, I will trouble you for the few guineas I had the honour of lending you.”

“ My Lord,” said Melbourne coolly, “ the debt shall be discharged tomorrow ;” as he said these words he turned on his heel, and hastily sought his own chambers.

The promise he had thus indignantly made, he knew not how he should be enabled to keep; the sum, it is true, was not large, but Melbourne's ability to raise it was still smaller; the very few books he possessed, even if well sold, would scarcely be equivalent to it, and books like his were not likely to sell well at Cambridge. He resolved, however, to deposit them and his watch at a pawnbroker's, and to lay himself under no obligations to any other of the young one's, since of all his gay companions, Lord Aubrey de Vere was the one of whom he had the best opinion. In the bitterness of his heart he almost forswore all friendship, and all hope; he felt forlorn, and almost wished himself annihilated. While he was in this happy temper of mind, his tutor, a man grave, solemn, and implacable, entered the room. Melbourne trembled as the heavy footsteps crossed the creaking boards. He reached a chair, the stately gentleman seated himself, and Melbourne, overcome with anxiety, though conscious of no evil, shook with terror before him.

“ Mr.

“ Mr. Melbourne,” cried the reverend terrifier with an awful voice, “ your deportment hitherto has been regular and laudable, your industry has been proverbial, and your quiet manners have obtained you general esteem.”

Melbourne bowed; these words corresponded but ill with the expression of the features, and he waited for what was to follow.

“ Mr. Melbourne, I am sorry to say stories greatly to your disadvantage—yes, Sir, greatly indeed to your disadvantage, have been spread abroad: you have certainly been absent ever since the concert about which your friend Mr. Howard, was so active. This, Sir, you cannot deny.”

Melbourne bowed again, but remained silent.

“ So long an absence, Sir, is in itself a blameable fault,—yes, Sir, it is a very blameable fault, but the manner in which you are said to have conducted yourself during that absence, is more blameable—yes, Sir, it is indeed far more blameable. You are ac-

VOL. III. D cused,

cused, Sir, of having seduced a virtuous young woman from her parents—yes, Sir, you are accused of having seduced her from her parents; of having conducted her to London, the very sink of dissipation and debauchery, and after having satiated your libertinism, of having left her to want and infamy—yes, Sir, of having abandoned the helpless victim of your intemperate vice to misery and infamy.—What have you to say, Sir, in reply to all this? I say, Mr. Melbourne, what have you to oppose to this serious accusation?”

“I have only to say, Sir,” replied Melbourne, who now felt invigorated by conscious innocence, “that you have been imposed upon, that the charge is false.”

“And do you think,” Mr. Melbourne, resumed the tutor, “that I am a man to listen to stories on light grounds? I say, Sir, do you think I would give credit to so serious a charge without sufficient foundation? The manner in which I have treated you, Sir, proves how much I am inclined to lenity—yes, Sir, it proves that I wish to shew you mercy. I have condescended to visit you in private, to hear
your

your exculpation, and to accept your repentance; and you tell me I have been deceived—you tell me the charge is false. Is that your exculpation, Mr. Melbourne—is that your repentance?"

"Sir," replied Melbourne, who during the measured pauses of the orator recovered his firmness of mind, "were it in my power to relate circumstantially every thing that has passed since my departure from hence, no blame would attach to my conduct. I have been active in the cause of virtue; I scorn seduction, and loathe libertinism as much as any man; and though it has not been my happy fate to rescue an innocent victim from the betrayer, I have had the good fortune to restore her uninjured to a safe asylum: she had fortunately escaped without my assistance."

"You speak in parables, Mr. Melbourne," said the terrific tutor, "you speak in parables,—your declamation is very fine, and your action very expressive—yes, Sir, your language is very eloquent, and your ges-

tures very energetic; but, Sir, declamation and energy are not proof,—no, Sir, eloquence and theatrical attitudes bring no conviction. What have you been doing, Sir, and where have you been? Answer me these questions, Sir, and speak plainly—yes, Sir, speak plainly,—use no flowery tropes and figures, no circumlocution, no repetition of redundant phrases, but in a plain and simple manner, in an unadorned narrative, relate all that has passed, and remember, Sir, that *truth* is, like *love-
liness*,

“ When unadorned, adorned the most.”

Agitated as Melbourne's whole soul was, he could scarcely help smiling at this pompous recommendation of simplicity of diction; but bowing with assumed gravity, he said, “ Were none but myself involved in my tale, Sir, I should not hesitate to declare the whole truth.”

“ And do you hesitate, Sir,” vociferated the tutor, “ do you hesitate—Oh! Mr. Melbourne, hesitation proves your guilt—
yes,

yes, Sir, your hesitation proves that you are indeed the culprit I have been told you are. I can hear no more," said the tutor, (perceiving that Melbourne was about to speak;) "I can hear no more;—this will be a terrible hindrance to your obtaining a clerical degree—yes, Mr. Melbourne, this will indeed be sufficient to shut you out from the pale of the church;—a libertine, a seducer of innocence, an extravagant spendthrift, a contemner of college regulations, and a contumacious offender who refuses to answer the plain questions so mildly put to him—yes, Mr. Melbourne, your insolent contumacy in hesitating to reply—these are heavy charges—yes, Sir, they are indeed heavy charges. It would be well for you, Sir, to quit the college; sentence of rustication, if not of expulsion, will certainly be pronounced against you, and your experience must have shewn you—yes, Sir, your experience, young as you are, must have convinced you how rarely any man succeeds in the church, who has been disgraced at college—yes, Sir, how very

seldom any man can obtain a situation in the church who has suffered any degradation in the University."

"The time, however," said Melbourne, "will come when my innocence will be made apparent."

"I can stay to hear no more now, Sir," said the gentle and placable tutor; "had you chosen to answer my fair questions, without so much circumlocution and repetition, you might have had a chance of clearing up your innocence; but as it is, I am sorry to say—yes, I am sorry to say, Mr. Melbourne, that your guilt is but too apparent; innocence never hesitates, Mr. Melbourne—no, Sir, innocence never hesitates."

And with these consoling words, the stately gentleman departed, leaving Melbourne a prey to a thousand indescribable sensations.

CHAP. V.**COMFORT.**

THE night that Melbourne passed after this pleasing interview, was scarcely more enviable than that which a condemned criminal has to sustain in his cell: he attempted not to sleep; he continued walking to and fro in his chamber with perturbed and hurried step; he regretted for the first time that avidity of study which had kept him so shut up within himself, that he had cultivated no friendships in the college, and knew not to whom to apply for counsel or for comfort. Howard, the immediate cause of his distress, and the only person whom he would have

D 4

consulted,

consulted, was out of his reach in the present emergency; and the morning sun flashed through his casement before Melbourne had determined how to proceed. As Sir Percival Bamford, or Lord William Arundel, occurred to his mind, he rejected the idea of seeking their assistance with disdain; and as soon as the shops were opened, he hastened to avail himself of the only resource he could imagine; and depositing his books and watch at a pawnbroker's, obtained for them a sum rather more than equivalent to his debt to Lord Aubrey; but which, with the accustomed interest, would swallow up four-fifths of the stipend which he was to receive from Mr. Searle at the next day of payment. In this situation, the absenting himself from college, so eloquently recommended by the tutor, was indeed a necessary step, and yet nothing could be more unwelcome. To quit the University at a moment when he was studying so hard, when he was attending a course of lectures particularly interesting, when he had many plans of deep research revolving

volving in his mind, was a terrible death-blow to his hopes; yet how could he stay? He had not a single guinea for the daily occurrences; and to run up bills his honour could not brook, as they must ultimately fall on his benevolent protector;—moreover, he dreaded to be dismissed by the thunder of the college; and accordingly conveying the important sum to Lord Aubrey's chambers, the wretched Melbourne abandoned Cambridge, without knowing whither to bend his steps, or where to hide his head. His hurried pace soon carried him many miles from the scene of his sorrow; and as he wandered without observing whither, so he noticed not the calls of hunger, and continued walking till, faint and oppressed with emptiness and fatigue, he looked round him to ascertain whither he had rambled. The features of the country were perfectly unknown to him; and at the moment that he began his survey, he found himself entering on a large and wild common, rough with brambles and furze, at the remote extremity of which he perceived

a village, to which he determined now to bend his steps. As he walked onward slowly and wearily, his thoughts, which had hitherto wasted themselves in vague reveries, began to assume a more determinate form. He consulted with his own judgment whether it would be better to seek his friend Howard, and impart to him the misery to which he was reduced, or immediately to shelter his griefs and distresses in the paternal bosom of Mr. Searle. To both these plans his irritated mind found strong objections. Howard was already labouring under distress of mind, and debility of body; neither was Howard rich enough to relieve the pecuniary part of the difficulties he had caused;—as for the disgrace, Melbourne felt that the generous spirit of his friend would impel him to clear him from that, at the risk of the most serious and permanent inconveniences to himself—inconveniences which had induced him to consent to a still longer separation from an adored and tender bride; and Melbourne scorned the idea of extricating himself,

self, a mere solitary individual, by involving one whose fate would include many tender links. From Howard, then, he turned resolutely away; and difficulties, scarcely less insurmountable, lay in the way of his return to Mr. Searle. What a reward for the long and generous friendship of that worthy man, to carry to him disgrace and penury! to load him with debts he was very unequal to discharge, and to overwhelm him with the terrible discovery that all his endeavours had proved abortive! Melbourne's heart sickened as he viewed this gloomy prospect. To Lord George Montague he could not apply without discovering the whole business to Mr. Searle, even could his spirit have stooped to beg pecuniary relief of any man; and from the pressure of disgrace, who could relieve him? The consciousness that it was undeserved, could but ill enable the sensitive mind of Melbourne to support it: he was, however, young, strong, and active, and he resolved to endeavour to turn these qualifications to some account, and no longer to be

an useless drone in the great hive of society. As he formed this invigorating resolution, he stepped onward with firmer energy; but this new vigour relaxed into more than former languor, as the pallid cheek of Julia rushed upon his memory;—all his paradisaical plans of union with her were over for ever. Could a disgraced man aspire to share the fate of Julia Dalrymple? Alas! this was the severest infliction of all—to abandon for ever all the delightful hopes, all the fairy visions which had, unconsciously, animated his studies, and stimulated his exertions. Julia thought him inconstant, and he felt himself disgraced? What could it now signify what happened more to a being so truly crushed—so thoroughly wretched? No, he would seek neither Mr. Searle nor Mr. Howard; he would not seek employment to sustain a life so hated; he would languish and die in misery and despair; for nothing could extricate him out of these cruel embarrassments. He even began to debate whether immediate suicide would not in his case

case be excusable ; but all the moral and religious principles he had hitherto cultivated so sedulously arose to oppose the suggestion ; yet still it returned with increasing vigour to his mind, and he resolved to give the matter a fair hearing. As he entered the little village, however, the name of Macartney under the sign of the public-house caught his eye, and turned the torrent of his thoughts ; he examined the sign ; it was the same as that of the inn where Mr. Searle delivered him to the care of Mr. Macartney. “ Alas ! ” thought Melbourne, “ and here is the consequence of all those debates and arguments— all those eager wishes and well-weighed resolutions. Oh ! the sorrow I felt in that parting from my first friends was surely prophetic ! my hesitation, my indecision, even at the moment that tore me from that peaceful abode, where alone I have ever known true happiness ! Ah ! my friend, my father, why did you then force me from you ? Yet surely he was right ; his better judgment had decided for me ; and though the consequences
are

are thus fatal to me, they are not imputable to him. Misfortune has, from my birth, persecuted me, and it is time to finish a being that can no longer be of any use, or hope for any happiness in this world. Alas! no—even at this moment of desperation, the words, the very accents of Mr. Searle, recal my troubled reason; his ‘who shall control you?’ vibrate in my ears with all the force of a law from heaven, and I sink, submissive, beneath the heavy inflictions in which I am involved.”

With a mind suddenly cleared from the creeping mists of error by the happy recollection of that impressive sentence, Melbourne entered the inn, ordered a breakfast, and with a calm command of himself, corrected the oppressive despair that was taking hold of every fibre of his heart: he determined to rest where he was for four-and-twenty hours, and, in the course of that time, to review all the arguments for and against every possible mode of proceeding, and decide when his judgment should have regained more command

mand over his impetuous feelings: he found, on inquiry, that he had wandered through very unfrequented roads, nearly five-and-twenty miles from Cambridge. The hamlet was a poor one, and its inhabitants on neighbourhood excited little curiosity;—the country around was, however, beautiful and picturesque; and Melbourne wandered forth again, with renovated strength, to meditate, as was his custom, in the fields or woods. It was a clear, bright, autumnal day; the sun had still great power, though his diurnal course was much circumscribed, and Melbourne was enjoying the genial influence of his beams, and acknowledging, with heart-felt joy and humble gratitude, the increasing serenity of his mind, when he heard his name softly pronounced in a voice which, though scarcely audible, he knew to be that of Julia. Oppressed by a thousand overwhelming ideas, Melbourne's serenity instantly fled; and turning round, his varying countenance betrayed the rapid emotions of his soul: he was in an instant at the side of Julia.

Julia. She held out her hand to him with an undecided air; but Melbourne seizing the half-reluctant prize, pressed it to his lips, to his heart. All this while not a syllable was uttered—not another human being appeared. The circumstance was strange, incomprehensible; yet Melbourne seemed incapable of asking any explanation: his eyes were fixed on Julia's face, and, in proportion as her countenance varied, he felt more firm; and when at last tears fell from her lovely eyes, he acquired courage to speak, and articulated her name. The sound of his voice seemed to recal Julia's recollection; and smiling through her tears, she said, "You will wonder to see me in this remote village; but I am a traveller, Mr. Melbourne; you will rejoice to hear that I have quitted Mr. and Mrs Trebison, and am now on my way to my friend Caroline; I say you will rejoice, for I yet depend on your friendship."

Melbourne's face would have shamed the deepest scarlet as Julia pronounced the word
friendship

friendship with some emphasis; but he had again lost his presence of mind, and Julia, finding he would not speak, continued—

“I stopped at this village to change horses, and take some refreshment, and seeing in the parlour a book with your name in the first leaf, I made some inquiries, which induced me to seek and surprise you in your solitary rambles.”

Melbourne was all ear and eye; absorbed in the felicity of gazing at Julia, and listening to the tones of her voice, his understanding scarcely took in the sense of what she said; and much as he would have given two hours ago for such an opportunity, he now forgot he had any thing to explain.

Julia, however, perplexed and embarrassed both by his silence and his undeviating gaze, said at length, “Melbourne, are you not well?”

“Angelic Julia!” said he, “yes, I am well, but most miserable.”

“Miserable!” repeated Julia, with an accent of the tenderest sympathy.

“Yes,

"Yes, Julia," replied Melbourne (on whose mind all the feverish recollections of his hopeless situation with respect to her had rushed with double force)—"yes, Julia, there exists not so great a wretch as Melbourne!"

"And how!" exclaimed Julia. "Oh, God! you have not deserved it;—no, Melbourne, you have not deserved it, and you cannot be wholly wretched."

"Oh! beloved Julia!" cried he, in agony, "this sweetness kills me;—yes, you are indeed too good—too—too amiable; Julia, I am most miserable!"

"Melbourne," said Julia, laying her hand upon his arm, and gazing, in her turn, steadfastly in his face, "relieve my anxiety—speak—you are not guilty!"

"No, thank heaven!" said Melbourne, "but I suffer the punishment of guilt."

"No, no, Melbourne," said Julia, her face brightening as she spoke, "innocence can never suffer what guilt only can feel—conscious remorse and internal despair."

"Blessed

"Blessed comforter!" said Melbourne, drawing her nearer to him, and gently encircling her waist with his arm.

"And what," questioned Julia, in a half whisper, "what, my best, my earliest friend, my preserver, what has happened thus to distress you?"

Melbourne felt his bosom relieved from an oppressive load as he poured into the commiserating breast of Julia the tale of his embarrassment with a rapidity, a vehemence that commanded her attention, had she had no other reason for giving it wholly to him.

"And is this," said Julia, "the overwhelming distress which inflicted upon innocence the tortures of guilt? Dear Melbourne, you have relieved me from very weighty apprehensions; you have been acting nobly; your friend and his espoused will bless you through life as their benefactor. Ah! Melbourne, your's is an enviable lot; born to be useful to all within your sphere; how many at this moment feel themselves indebted to you for happiness, for life itself,"

said

said she, kindling as she spoke. "Dear Melbourne, the disgrace which weighs so heavily on your mind will soon be done away, and all your distresses, my best friend, will be as a painful vision of the night, which early morning, with reviving radiance, will disperse; come let us return to the inn; I have yet a stage to go, and shall be overtaken by darkness."

"Are you alone?" said Melbourne eagerly.

"A servant of my friend Caroline's attends the chaise on horseback," replied she.

"Oh Julia! dear Julia, suffer me to accompany you in the chaise to the next stage."

"Melbourne, my good friend, you do not consider what you ask;—No, this must not be."

Melbourne felt by her manner, that this refusal, gentle as it was, was decisive, and forbore to press her, but drawing her arm within his, they walked slowly and silently to the inn. Just ere they reached it, Julia turned back for a few yards to a spot where they
could

could not be observed; and seriously addressing Melbourne, she said, "I am going, Melbourne, to put your friendship to the test. This meeting, in which you have unburthened your heart, has perhaps, given you, as you yourself have expressed it, real consolation; yet, Melbourne, if you refuse this, (putting a purse into his hand), which I can well spare, and you most truly want, you are yet to learn the nature of friendship, of attachment."

A sudden flush passed rapidly across Melbourne's cheek; he took the purse, pressed it to his lips, thrust it into his bosom; and covered his face with both hands.

"Victorious Melbourne," said Julia playfully, "you have conquered false shame."

"The victory," said Melbourne, "belongs to Love and Julia."

It was now Julia's turn to blush, and be silent; recovering herself, however, she said, "For the triumph however obtained, dear Melbourne, I thank you, but it is high time we should part."

Melbourne

Melbourne now led her into the inn; the chaise was ready, the baggage stowed,—and as he helped her to ascend the step, he felt as if it was impossible he could suffer her to depart without him; he even made an effort to enter, but her serious look forbade him, and without another word on either side, the chaise drove rapidly away.

This unexpected interview had effected a total revolution in Melbourne's feelings. He no longer felt so hopeless of obtaining Julia; he almost felt certain, that a beginning love for him was kindling in her heart; he was now as much too happy, as he had before been too miserable, to think rationally; and he returned to the spot where he had conversed with Julia, and lingered there long after the last streak of red had ceased to tinge the western horizon.

In the revery which held him there enthralled, we will not pretend to follow him, nor to detail the various conjectures to which his repeated wanderings gave rise at the inn.

When

When he returned thither, however, he enquired for his book, which was a volume of beautiful poetry by Mr. Bowles; and as it was not forth-coming in answer to his enquiries, he concluded that it was exalted to the honour of being Julia Dalrymple's travelling companion.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

CROSS EXAMINATION.

THE succeeding day, Melbourne measured back his way to Cambridge, and was almost at the entrance of the town, before he recollected that any thing had driven him thence besides pecuniary distress. Of his disgrace Julia had made so light, that it had vanished from his mind; and the aerial visions which had amused him on the road, had been too delightful to recal its remembrance. The sight of those noble and venerable buildings, however, awoke him to a perfect recollection of all the causes that had forced him from Cambridge; rustication, expulsion,

pulsion, sounded in his ears, and almost drove him back to his hiding-place, but the consoling voice, the animating praises of Julia revived his hopes, and determined him to assert his conscious innocence; yet what mode to pursue he knew not—he had formed no resolution, he had suggested no plan, but it was now necessary to act, and he decided with firmness; he reflected that the master of the college was a man famed for his benevolence, and he sent a request to be permitted to address him in private. The request was instantly granted, though it was in an hour usually dedicated to study; but the master had heard Melbourne's name coupled with disgrace and misery, and those united claims upon his heart were resistless. In a very few minutes then, Melbourne found himself in the apartment with the Doctor, who rose at the entrance of the young student, and with a friendly air invited him to be seated. The master was a very different being from the terrific tutor;—with an equal share of acquired learning, he possessed, at

least, ten times the other's natural understanding, and fifty fold his native candour and humanity.

"Mr. Melbourne," said the venerable man, "I am glad to see you. I was told you had quitted college abruptly, which I regretted, because your immediate departure would have been esteemed a sufficient proof of the truth of the charges against you, and I was grieved that a youth, whose regular behaviour has hitherto gained him universal approbation, should thus incur universal censure."

The Doctor paused to give Melbourne an opportunity of speaking, of which he did not appear very desirous of availing himself, yet finding it necessary to say something, the youth replied, "he was honoured by a good opinion thus expressed."

The worthy master resumed his harangue, saying, "It is undoubtedly, on this subject, Mr. Melbourne, that you have wished to speak to me."—

Melbourne bowed.

"It

"It is therefore as well to hasten at once into the midst of things, and tell you, that I have received from the tutor an account of his interview with you, and am sorry to find you added a reluctance to explain yourself to the heavy charges already exhibited against you."

"Of those charges," said Melbourne modestly, but firmly,—“of those charges I am innocent.”

"I am willing to hope so," replied the Doctor; "I should be sorry to find you unable to clear your character. I should be sorry to find the promise of sincerity and virtue your countenance and manners give, was not to be depended on."

"Sir, said Melbourne, rising and bowing, "did the affair involve only myself, I would not scruple to detail the minutest circumstances of it; but I have a friend, whose prospects a too full confession might for ever shade, though he is as free from guilt as I am myself."

“ I can allow a great deal,” said the master, “ for the fidelity of friendship ; but you must remember, Melbourne, that in this instance a great deal is also due to yourself ; your character is seriously attacked, you are accused of having violated that fidelity, to which you now hold, by secret treachery and open violence ; you are accused of having first seduced, and then abandoned a woman,—a young, a defenceless, an innocent woman.”

“ Again,” said Melbourne, “ I can only repeat that I am innocent.”

“ Assertion, Mr. Melbourne,” resumed the Doctor, “ however ingenuously made, or firmly repeated, is no proof ;—are there no circumstances that can be fairly related, to set this business in a clear point of view ? If not, your visit to me can be of no avail.”

“ Most true,” said Melbourne, “ and were the secret mine alone, did it involve my future interest ever so nearly, with what readiness should I disclose it to candour, to goodness like this—but my friend—”

“ Your

"Your friend lies disabled," said the Doctor, "at an inn; can you not tell me by what chance he is thus disabled?"

"By the overturn of a chaise," replied Melbourne, "he dislocated his shoulder, and broke his leg."

"A very sufficient answer," said the Doctor, "and whither was he then going?"

"We were going together," answered Melbourne, "to endeavour to recover the unfortunate young woman who had been carried away from her friends. We had seen her mother's emotions and we wished——"

"To restore the girl to her?" asked the Doctor.

"In her rage," replied Melbourne, "the mother swore never to receive her again; but we wished to find her a safe asylum. My friend was prevented from proceeding by the accident I have mentioned, and my endeavours were retarded by the necessity of assisting him. The whole enterprise thus devolved on me, and for some days I pursued my enquiries without success; at length, however,

I did succeed, and had the felicity of placing in security that uninjured object of my endeavours."

"I should be sorry," said the master somewhat sternly, "to convict you of duplicity. This tale, as you have related it, is honourable both to your friend Howard and yourself, and why should you have scrupled to disclose it before?"

"Because," said Melbourne, (all the blood in his body rushing rapidly in his face) "because, though this is strictly true, it is not the whole truth, and there are circumstances behind, which, while they would serve to prove more fully the truth of what I have asserted, would also involve my friend in trouble."

"Answer me, however," said the Doctor, "sincerely and readily to a few plain questions—You have not fought with Howard?"

"I have not."

"The young lady in question, whom you say you found uninjured, has not been injured since?"

"She

"She has not!"

"Of the least prevarication in these two particulars, I hope your conscience does not accuse you?"

"Indeed, it does not," replied Melbourne earnestly.

"I am willing to believe," resumed the Doctor, "that it does not, and I will not decide against you without further investigation; nor, without further investigation, can I, however I may be inclined, decide in your favour; yet let me give you a little advice."

The Doctor paused, and Melbourne said, "For such advice I shall be most grateful."

"I would wish you," said the master, "to resume your studies; I am glad you had not left the college."

"Pardon me," said Melbourne "for interrupting you, but I did leave Cambridge yesterday; and when I left it, my intention was to return no more."

"I rejoice then," said the master, "that you so quickly repaired your error; the absence of a day will not be noticed; resume then

then your study, but though it may be, as well to have it universally known that you are in college, yet perhaps it might be advisable not to be much in public."

"And yet," said Melbourne firmly, "ought not conscious innocence to be undaunted?"

"My dear youth," said the Doctor kindly, "in this age of brass, guilt too often assumes the privilege of innocence, and it is become difficult to distinguish between the calm steadiness of innocence, and the unblushing assurance of vice; but in that particular follow your own judgment; on one other point I wish to give you some counsel, which perhaps you will follow with reluctance."

"I cannot imagine," replied Melbourne gracefully, "that I can be reluctant to follow the advice of Doctor Sinclair!"

"You are young, Mr. Melbourne," returned the Doctor, "and of the impetuosity of your nature, your flashing eyes and varying countenance have borne perpetual testimony

mony during our conference. I am well aware too of the high sense of honour you entertain, by your determined fidelity to your friend's secret, yet I wish to obtain from you a promise to seek no vengeance against those whom you may consider as your enemies in this affair. You design to enter holy orders; and I understand, with regret, that your future prospects are not equal to your talents, or what I believe of your merits. Let me then entreat you to recollect that any conduct of the kind I wish you to avoid, must draw down upon you the anger of the University, and entirely shade your future prospects; I speak only to your interest, because—.”

“ I am ashamed,” said Melbourne, “ to have suffered you thus long to suppose that I was so difficult to be persuaded. I have, most worthy Sir, once in my life, and that at no great distance from the present moment, been near fighting a duel; I was happily prevented by the cowardice of my opponent, but the feelings of my own heart, and the admonitions of the best of men, will

for ever sufficiently deter even my impetuous nature from seeking another; should I be insulted, attacked,—alas! even then I would, if possible, avoid it.”

“ Mr. Melbourne,” said the kind Doctor, “ I am extremely glad to have had this conversation with you; it has created a lively interest in my heart for you, and I hope and trust this affair will end well for you. Will you inform me where to find your friend Howard?”

“ Oh! Sir,” said Melbourne grasping the Doctor’s hands, “ are you going to question him? Oh! his generosity to me will make him reveal the whole of his own important secret.”

“ I shall merely write to him the subject of our present conference,” replied the Doctor, “ and tell him, that if he corroborates your testimony in the points mentioned, it will be fully sufficient; but thus much, Mr. Melbourne, is necessary for your vindication.”

Melbourne bowed, and gave the required address, and then took a grateful leave of the
worthy

worthy Doctor. In his way back to his chambers he redeemed his books and his watch, all of which he now looked at with redoubled pleasure, considering them as the gifts of Julia Dalrymple.

CHAP. VI.

SUMMING UP OF EVIDENCE.

OF a nature ardent and impetuous, strongly susceptible of emotions both of grief and joy, though capable of great firmness and energy, Melbourne now yielded too rapidly to the tide of bliss that seemed pouring in upon him; and he considered this felicity as

the work of Julia Dalrymple. She had enabled him to return to Cambridge ; her soothing words had encouraged him to rise superior to despondency ; she had restored him to his pursuits, his studies, to himself—nay, more, she had restored to him all the fairy visions of indefinable happiness, which her idea cast over all the airy castles he built in his frequent reveries. He considered her as the architect of his felicity, and he remembered, with a delight the most exquisite, that she had not shrunk from his expression of the word *love*, she had even, immediately after, thanked him ; and William Macartney's childish combination of their names were perpetually in his mind, Melbourne and Julia ! Fascination was in the very sound, and now, that his immediate perplexities were dispersed, he wholly forgot that any other obstacle could possibly exist. In an hour or two, however, some degree of rationality returned, and he recollected, in time to save the post, that Howard would probably confess too much.

To

To obviate this, he wrote as follows;—

“ TO MR. HOWARD.

“ Be not surprised, dearest Howard, by the question you will receive from our excellent master, into any confession that may be prejudicial to yourself;—be rational, and acknowledge just what will exculpate your friend, who has every reason to rely on Doctor Sinclair’s goodness, and remember, you can no way so fully contribute to your Melbourne’s happiness, as by carefully guarding your own.—Adieu, in haste,

“ H. MELBOURNE.”

This billet dispatched, he resumed his delightful cogitations, and was, for the ensuing day, too happy to study, or to reflect; and on the morning of the following one, he received a summons to the master’s chambers. The Doctor welcomed him with a benevolent smile, and a cordial shake of the hand; and giving him a packet, which Melbourne instantly knew to be from Howard, said, “ I have already
read

read those letters twice, but I must request you to read them aloud to me."

The first thing Melbourne saw on unfolding the envelope, was his own billet to Howard; he coloured as he laid it down, and the Doctor said, in a tone of affected reproach, "So you were wicked enough to advise your friend to act with duplicity." The next paper was a letter from Howard to the master, which on being again desired, Melbourne read aloud, though with many interruptions.

"TO THE REV. DR. SINCLAIR."

"*Most reverend and worthy Sir.*

"Though I am scarcely able to write, I cannot delay a moment replying fully to your questions, that I may not only fully exculpate my friend Melbourne, but, if possible, dispose you and every one to do him full and adequate justice; he is indeed the worthiest of human beings, and the note I enclose from him, proves him also one of the noblest. To you, most worthy Doctor, I will entrust my secret; if the divulging it can add to Melbourne's

Melbourne's honour, let it be universally known; to your discretion I commit it. Maria, Sir, is my wife,—my untouched, my rescued wife, and worthy to adorn the choice of any man, were he even a distinguished prelate of the church. Melbourne alone knew my secret, for I felt how inimical it would be to my future hopes to have it known that I had married a woman who had sung in public. Melbourne now will not scruple to disclose fully to you every particular of the late business, and by so doing will establish his own merit beyond dispute. I could write for ever on the subject, but my hand is unable longer to hold the pen, than to subscribe myself, Doctor Sinclair's most gratefully devoted,

"AMBROSE HOWARD."

Melbourne shed torrents of tears at reading this generous and full vindication of his conduct from the trembling hand of his friend, nor were the benevolent Doctor's eyes unwetted with the dew of sympathy.

He

He took Melbourne's hand, and said, "I rejoice in your triumph, young man, but I will not wound your feeling heart by making it as full as I might do. I will exculpate you, and yet will strictly guard your friend's secret: he has, perhaps, been imprudent, but not guilty, and as Maria has only made one public exhibition of her talents, it may be in time forgotten; at least, his marriage shall remain secret for me, till he chuses to reveal it. And now, Melbourne," continued the worthy Doctor, "relate to me the circumstances, which, I must confess, raise my curiosity."

Melbourne willingly gave a minute detail of the eventful week, and had the gratification of seeing that the Doctor truly sympathised with the feelings of himself and Howard; and through the whole he bestowed many warm commendations on the character of Maria as it rose to view in her generous contest with Howard, on the subject of declaring their marriage; and after a conference of two hours, Melbourne returned home to his chambers,

chambers, fully gratified by the partial kindness and benevolent sympathy of the worthy Doctor,

CHAP. VII.

RESTORED to peace and contentment, Melbourne avoided any rencontre with Lord Aubrey de Vere, whom he thoroughly despised, and who took every opportunity to vilify his character behind his back. Though this was, of all injuries, that which the impetuous spirit of Melbourne could least easily brook, he constrained his ardent temper in obedience to the worthy Doctor's advice, and

and in pursuance of his own resolutions; yet when they met by chance, he could not forbear displaying the contempt he felt, and once, when Lord Aubrey used some sneering expression in his hearing, Melbourne went up to him, and said in a half whisper, yet in a most decided manner, "The whole truth is known, and if further insults are not forborne, will be quickly divulged, nor will rank or fortune screen the atrocious offender from merited disgrace."

Lord Aubrey, who, had he belonged to the college of which Dr. Sinclair was master, would have been expelled upon the first discovery of the truth, found Melbourne's whisper very difficult to swallow;—with a great gulp, however, he managed to get rid of it, and as a very few weeks would now terminate the period he was to remain at the University, he thought he might as well leave it, if he could, without incurring the disgrace of expulsion. From this moment, therefore, he confined himself to underhand whispers, and Melbourne felt that he had some merit
in

in resisting the impulse that prompted him to chastise such ungenerous, unmanly conduct. When, however, he retired into himself, he felt a supply of internal happiness that counterbalanced all the petty mortifications Lord Aubrey's inuendoes occasioned him. The last interview with Julia afforded an unfailing store of hope and delight; though he reproached himself as inattentive and careless, for not having learnt whether her friend Caroline, whom, when she mentioned her, he concluded to be the eldest Miss Willis, still continued to reside at Holts, and also, by what means she had effected her liberation from Trebison's family; but these omissions were very trifling drawbacks to the pure felicity he felt in the conviction that he was dear to Julia! Since their childish days, indeed, they had not been much together; they had had but few interviews, but every one was marked by some peculiar circumstance, that rendered it more than commonly interesting, and indeed that attracted their hearts towards each other with irresistible force. Julia had
not

not, indeed, confessed her affection for him, nor had he made any positive declaration of love; but he felt convinced that she was aware of his attachment to her, and that she not only did not disapprove it, but had given him as much encouragement as he could reasonably hope for, considering their circumstances; she had not disguised that she felt strongly interested in his welfare and in his innocence, and to have interested the tender bosom of Julia was a most unbounded happiness for Melbourne.

It became, however, necessary for him to give up reveries and castle-building, and attend to real duties, and severe studies; and recollecting that it was only by active exertion he could merit or lay claim to Julia's love, he resolutely shut out all the softening and bewildering ideas to which his passion inclined him, and attended only to those remembrances which stimulated his exertions and invigorated his resolutions. He passed in intense study the short remainder of the term, at the end of which he had the happiness to

see

see Lord Aubrey de Vere, Sir Percival Bamford, and Lord William Arundel, take their final departure from Cambridge, having finished that literary sojourn which was to throw a brilliancy over their future lives, and prepare them for the senatorial service of their country.

Before he returned to Mr. Searle, Melbourne went to see his friend Howard, who was nearly recovering the accident that had caused him so tedious a confinement. The joy and pure friendship with which these young men greeted each other, did honour to both their hearts. Howard said, he had received several compassionate visits from his more than ever-adored Maria, and that every time he saw her, he found new reason to applaud the choice of his heart; and Melbourne gladdened him by a full description of the interest and sympathy expressed by Doctor Sinclair. Howard told his friend he had improved the period of his confinement to the best of his ability, as he had not neglected his studies, and he flattered himself he should not

not be found to have lost a great deal of time. After an affectionate interview, they parted with a promise to meet at Cambridge at the very beginning of the ensuing term.

Melbourne was received by Mr. Searle with the most affectionate kindness; Miss Searle was, alas! become almost incapable of distinguishing objects, or of expressing her own feelings; her long ill health had reduced her to a state of powerless debility, more affecting and more afflicting than severe disorders, and Mr. Searle, who evidently grew melancholy, (nor was it to be wondered at, though his situation was much improved) often lamented, that she, who had shared with him the sweet task of watching and guiding Melbourne's first childhood and early youth, should be deprived of the satisfaction of seeing his ripened manhood expanding into new virtues and perfections. Melbourne had much to relate to Mr. Searle; many affecting and interesting events had occurred since he had had any opportunity of conversing with the first friend of his youth; yet they were

were events so closely interwoven with the honour and happiness of others, that he found it difficult to explain any part of the circumstances, without violating the integrity of his friendships. Lord George Montague's history, it was surely necessary, should sleep in the bosom of silence ;—why should he reveal the undeserved infamy of Seymour, till he could also announce his return to honour and to peace ? much of Howard's future prospects depended on the secret of his marriage being carefully guarded ; and of his own passion for Julia Dalrymple, with all its fluctuations of hope and despair, he found it utterly impossible to speak :—on the four principal events of his life—therefore events which most fully interested his heart and affections, Melbourne found himself condemned to silence, and was necessitated to find his only reward in the approving whispers of his gratulating conscience. His vicinity to Lord George Montague was a source of frequent pleasure ; he often saw that excellent and grateful friend, saw him and Lady Susan enjoying the most
perfect

perfect felicity, and heard them, more than once, acknowledge him as its author. Melbourne often recalled the words of Julia in their last memorable conversation; she had called his an enviable lot,—she had told him he was born to be useful to all within his sphere, and recalled to his mind how many were indebted to him for happiness, and she herself for life. He felt, as these ideas glanced across his mind, something of the sublime enthusiasm which kindled in her eyes, and glowed in her cheeks, as with a benevolent design of recalling him from misery and despair, she had placed these heart-reviving images before him; he reflected too, with a secret pleasure, that of the history of Seymour and Lord George he was wholly ignorant, and acknowledged that these reflections, particularly when associated with the remembrance of her enchanting smile, were sufficient to gild the passing hours with exhilarating sunshine.

From these felicitous remembrances, however, he was one day recalled to the terrible realities

realities of life, by a hasty summons to attend Mr. Searle in his sister's bed-room. She had had a severe paroxysm during the night, and had recovered her entire senses, though with such an increased debility of body that evinced her end to be nearly approaching. Melbourne was extremely affected by the assumed composure of Mr. Searle, and by the recovered gleams of sense and sensibility in Miss Searle's emaciated countenance; a benevolent smile illuminated her features as Melbourne approached; she gazed first at him, and then at her brother, while each held a hand of the interesting sufferer. At length she spoke, "Often," said she, "when you have thought me insensible, I have wished for this moment,—for the power of rejoicing in the sight of my friends,—yes, Melbourne, I rejoice to see that you so well recompense my brother's care."

These were the first words Miss Searle had uttered for a long time; indeed for many weeks she had not spoken with so general a recollection, and Mr. Searle was visibly

affected; she observed it, and said, "My brother, you ought also to rejoice that I am permitted this happiness in my parting moments; apparently insensible as I have been, there have been intervals when I have felt and regretted my inability to express myself; I rejoice in the recovered power, it makes my departure happy."

She was again silent and exhausted, but after a few moments, she seemed unwilling to waste in inaction her newly-recovered powers, and she invoked the tenderest blessings on the two beings who stood beside her. "My all in this world," said she, "surely my death is enviable, supported by two so dear,"—and the smile that spread over her benignant face proved the truth of her words. Once more she closed her eyes; Mr. Searle's and Melbourne's were blinded by their tears; they continued to press the hand they still held, until a convulsive movement in its fibres awakened their attention; the benignant smile was still impressed on her countenance, but her eyes unclosed no more. The pure and peaceful spirit

spirit, after once more transiently illumining its corporeal mansion, had taken its flight to the region of souls † Mr. Searle instantly perceived the truth, and opening his arms to receive Melbourne, they wept on each other's bosom in silence. At length Mr. Searle made an effort, "Blessed!" said he, "is the death of the righteous; rejoice, Melbourne, that you have witnessed this affecting scene—rejoice that you have heard the last words, that you have shared the last benediction of my beloved sister."

Melbourne looked in Mr. Searle's countenance; it was firm, and illumined with a heavenly hope. "My sister is happy," resumed he, "and in a very short time I shall be with her; may my end be as peaceful, as blessed as her's!"—He paused, then looking at Melbourne—"You, Henry," said he, "may expect more years to pass ere you will be as my sister now is,—but even the longest period of human life is short and transitory; to this, you must come; lay it therefore to heart, and emulate her happy, her enviable departure."

With these words, the worthy man led Melbourne out of the chamber of death, and retiring to his own, desired to be left alone. It was some hours ere Melbourne again saw him, and when he did, a composed melancholy had taken possession of his countenance and manners, and he spoke of his sister with a tender firmness, that proved at once his affection and the strength of his mind. The intermediate time before the funeral was spent in moral conversations, which tended firmly to impress on Melbourne's mind those excellent principles, which had invigorated, without hardening, the heart of the worthy Mr. Searle; and when they attended the remains of that excellent woman to the grave, Mr. Searle himself officiated, with a steady voice, and a countenance kindling with celestial enthusiasm; every hope that could strengthen the mind in the performance of its most difficult duties, every argument that could induce steady perseverance in the right way, were visibly and affectingly set forth, in the whole tenor of his blameless

blameless life and manners, and in their effect upon his conduct at this afflicting moment; and every eye wept, and every heart beat in sympathy when the brother consigned the remains of his sister and friend to the grave.

CHAR. VIII.

FRIENDSHIP DISPLAYED.

WHILE Melbourne was still at Mayfield, he received the following letter from his friend Davenport,

“ In my last letter, dear Melbourne, I think I informed you that my uncle, Lord Charby, was in extreme ill health, and that from many circumstances I had reason to fear that I should be called out from my obscurity, once

more to face a world which entertains so ill an opinion of me. I might, it is true, have continued to conceal myself, but there are moments when all remembrance of self vanishes before the wishes, the entreaties of those whom we love. Alas ! your unfortunate friend has been so long shut out from the voice of sympathy, that his heart leaps forth with unusual enthusiasm to meet the blessed tones. I do not recollect whether I ever told you, that though I kept myself concealed from my mother and sister, (because I knew they would spare too large a portion of their scanty pittance to relieve my wants,) I still retained a friend near them, through whom I heard frequently of their welfare ; from this friend, I also learned my uncle's illness, and my mother's and sister's consequent removal from their own abode, to attend upon him. These most dear relatives were fully convinced of my innocence, and in the hours of languor, caused by illness, found opportunities and means to convince Lord Charlby of it also. The moment he believed me free from the stigma

stigma in which I had been involved, his worthy heart resumed its early prejudice in my favour, and he expressed the strongest wishes to see me. The distress of my mother and sister at the supposed impossibility of my being found to obey this request, was faithfully transmitted to me; and the whole business was set forth in such lively colours, that I determined, should the next letter be equally pressing, to wait on Lord Charlby, more for the sake of gratifying my mother's and sister's wishes, than from any prospect of advantage to myself.—Alas! what advantage could a being like your wretched Davenport, infamous and stigmatized, derive from the accession of fortune and honours? Should I dare, thought I, to go forth again into the world, and fancy my former shame effaced by the splendour of my present situation? Shall I not rather be a more conspicuous mark for the arrows of calumny, and the bitter shafts of ridicule? These thoughts were repulsive—but yet another letter, speaking still more strongly of my mother's and sister's despair,

determined me to risk all that could affect only myself, and fly to endeavour to give to them a gleam of that pleasure I am incapable of sharing.

“ I accordingly quitted the retirement where I had so long remained in obscurity, and went into the neighbourhood of Charlby Park. I there let my faithful adherent, (who was in effect a servant attending on my mother) know of my arrival, and in an hour my sister was in my arms; that generous girl shed tears of the purest joy into my bosom, while your wretched Davenport wept with anguish and despair. She consoled and soothed me with the benignity of an angel, painted the joy of my mother, and the satisfaction of Lord Charlby in colours that would have delighted any heart but one so long the victim of despair. But, alas! dear Melbourne, continued and hopeless misery shuts up all those passes in the bosom which ought to admit of pleasurable feelings; the only real gratification I felt, arose from the unabating tenderness of my mother and sister.

sister. In the course of the same day, they cautiously contrived to make my arrival known to Lord Charlby, and I was summoned to attend him. The particulars of the interview I need not describe—it was tender and affectionate, and the result of it was Lord Charlby's declaration that he had made me the heir in full to his estates and possessions both real and personal, deducting only legacies to my mother and sister; adding, that as I must assume the title and arms of Charlby, I should want some property to keep up my dignity. He gently blamed my father for his implacability, and bade me be of good cheer, telling me the world was indulgent, and that his will would be a weighty argument in my favour. This venerable parent, for such I may surely call him, draws very near his end; but the prospect of such a splendid change in my situation, gives no pleasure to the wretched bosom of your friend. The invaluable blessings I have lost for ever, so far beyond those unexpected and unprized baubles I am about to gain, prevent

my feeling the least satisfaction in any thing but the kindness of my friends; and the rank and fortune to which I am about to be exalted, will, I know, on the generous and lofty mind of my lost inestimable friend, have the cruel effect of rendering him still more inaccessible to my wishes, lest he should appear to yield that to rank, which innocence and pity had failed to obtain. Thus, dearest Melbourne, I feel further than ever removed from the completion of my wishes, and even your sanguine philosophy will be puzzled to find an avenue by which hope may again enter my bosom. Oh my friend! to a man, whose mind, like mine, is fully occupied with blessings like those I have forfeited, nothing has power to communicate pleasure; the consciousness even of my innocence, in the particular circumstance which drove me from all my hopes, cannot give me internal satisfaction, since it seems only the more heart-breaking to be excluded from all that can make me happy, without any real cause.—
Alas! dear Melbourne, I so truly feel the
state

state of degradation to which I am reduced, that I dare not even look forward, with pleasure, to the power I shall derive of being useful to those I love ! Who will condescend to be assisted, to be served, by a man labouring under imputations which have expelled him from the noblest hopes that ever warmed a human bosom ?—but, my friend, I ever chide myself for communicating to you the contagion of my melancholy ; your letters, your friendship alone have the power to rouse my drooping mind to any thing like vigorous exertion or smiling hope, and I repay you by clogging your spirits, and overwhelming your feelings with the heavy burden of my despair. As I am now situated, to abandon the title of Charlby will be impossible : here are too many persons surrounding my uncle for me to escape again into my obscurity ; his appointed executors are both here, and your miserable Seymour will in a short time be led a splendid sacrifice——but nonsense—I will cease this rhapsody,—Melbourne, farewell ! among all the friends your

talents and your virtues have hitherto and will ever continue to procure you, not one is more truly so, than your affectionate and faithful

“FREDERICK DAVENPORT.”

“P. S. I often wonder whether you are likely to meet with my lost treasures in your commerce with the world: Ah! my friend, even to you will I never breathe their names, —or you—but avaunt, deceitful hopes! fairy illusions, leave me! Never, never will I make known those dear, those beloved names so deeply engraven on my heart. Once more farewell!”

This letter caused to Melbourne a variety of emotions. He felt how necessary it was to the peace of his friend, that some steps should be taken to sound again the mind of Colonel Fortescue, and he gladly accepted an invitation from Lord George Montague to accompany him for a few days to London; there he determined if possible to wait upon Colonel Fortescue, and at any hazard, to enforce his former arguments, and if he found

found it necessary, to corroborate all he had to say with his friend's own letter, whose energy he thought must speak conclusively to a heart as noble as was that of the Colonel. The Colonel, however, was not in town, and Melbourne derived no other advantage from his journey than learning his present address; for active and zealous in whatever he undertook, Melbourne determined to hazard a letter to Colonel Fortescue, but this required some reflection, and he resolved to wait till he was again quietly at Mayfield. He paid, however, a visit to William Macartney, for whom he preserved a tender affection, and who was now placed with a lawyer of eminence, he having selected that profession for his pursuit; but William was from home, and Melbourne was not in the way when he returned the call; so that he lost both the pleasure of embracing a youth whom he loved, and the opportunity of obtaining further information respecting Julia. He heard, however, that Mr. and Mrs. Trebison were living away most magnificently,

nificantly, that Edmund Macartney and his wife and George were all abroad together, making the tour of the Continent, and on the fourth day after their departure Melbourne accompanied Lord George back into the country. The unabating friendship and gratitude of Lord George were uncommonly gratifying to Melbourne; yet not even from these did his generous soul receive a purer joy, than from the perfect unconcern with which that young nobleman now talked of Julia Dalrymple; his joy was, indeed, in its first lively emotions, disinterested, but in the course of some little time ideas of self insinuated themselves, and he felt that were he now, even by his circumstances, enabled to ask the hand of his adored Julia, he should not wound the bosom of his friend by such a step.

Lord George once more endeavoured to dissuade Melbourne from entering into holy orders, but he found him more than ever determined, and therefore contented himself with promising him his interest. His offers
of

of assistance in any way whatever were most liberal and friendly; but Melbourne was above accepting, even from a friend, any favours not absolutely necessary. Within the sum allowed him by Mr. Searle, he was determined to confine his expences, and the dear gift of Julia had rendered him comparatively rich.

Returned to the quietness of Mayfield, our young Quixote hazarded the following letter.

“ TO COLONEL FORTESCUE, EDINBURGH.

“ Will Colonel Fortescue pardon the temerity of this address from a man who has so few claims upon his indulgence as I have? and still more, can he forgive the subject on which I now venture to write? Colonel Fortescue may perhaps recollect that I once hazarded personally to plead the cause of a man whom I believe to be innocent, however appearances have been against him! The present situation of that man calls forth my tenderest sympathy, and impels me once more to risk offending

offending the jealous honour which I admire and venerate, by again interceding for that unfortunate being. Yet, my pen is incapable so powerfully to paint, or so impressively to describe his feelings as they are recorded in the letter I enclose ;—yes, Colonel Fortescue, I commit to you a sacred deposit, a faithful record of the wretched Davenport's situation ; I have disguised nothing from you, conscious that by facts alone he must stand or fall. Should you wish to have any further communication with me on this or any other subject, I shall in a week be again at Cambridge, where I shall be honoured by your commands, and remain,

“ Colonel Fortescue's

“ Most obedient servant

“ HENRY MELBOURNE.”

Inclosed in this letter, Melbourne sent to the Colonel the epistle of his friend, firmly believing that so faithful a transcript of his mind could not fail of its effect on the generous bosom of the soldier ; yet no sooner was

was it gone, than he thought the hazard a rash one, and would have been glad to have recalled it. It was now, however, if a mistake, an irremediable one, and not daring to consult any one on the subject, Melbourne was obliged to conceal his anxiety, and to confine it wholly to his own heart. In a few days more he took an affectionate leave of Mr. Searle and Lord George Montague, and returned to Cambridge.

CHAP. IX.

SPEEDY PROMOTION.

MELBOURNE was welcomed with rapturous gratitude by the enthusiastic Howard, who was perfectly recovered from his accident, and his chief tormentors being gone, his time passed very pleasantly, and was, with the utmost assiduity devoted to study. He had but a short period now to remain previous to his being admitted a member of that holy profession to which he had so long bent all his wishes, and Howard was to assume the sacred office at the same time. The two friends zealously prepared themselves for the examinations they were to undergo;

dergo, but the serenity of Melbourne was a little disturbed by the receipt of the following letter.

“ TO MR. MELBOURNE, CAMBRIDGE.

“ The mode you have adopted, my dear young friend, is in itself singular, but in whatever opinion it may confirm me with respect to Davenport, it strengthens my favourable sentiments towards you. Your young and unsuspicious mind detects not the plausible artifices by which more consummate villains can practise on the credulous and benevolent. The curious letter you enclosed to me, demands, however, further consideration, and with that view I yet delay to restore it. I hope the man for whom you so generously interest yourself, will recover his peace of mind when fortune again smiles upon him ; but I will enter into no comments on his letter—I will only repeat that I am, with the most cordial regard,

“ Mr. Melbourne's faithful humble servant

“ ARCHIBALD FORTESCUE.”

Undecided

Undecided as to the effect which his interference would produce, Melbourne suffered extreme agitation ; he wrote, however, frequently to Davenport in his usual consolatory strain, and forbore to mention a syllable respecting Colonel Fortescue till the affair should take a more decided face. He absorbed himself wholly in study, and at the appointed time took his degree with the highest honours the University can bestow ; and obtaining a curacy in Yorkshire, while his friend Howard was almost equally successful, he determined, after taking leave of Mr. Searle, to take possession of the humble independence his unremitting efforts had at length obtained.

Howard's curacy, which he held merely till a rectory in the gift of his own family became vacant, was not a great many miles distant from Cambridge, and he settled himself in it with the more pleasure, because it was within reach of occasional visits to his adored Maria. Melbourne's situation was in Yorkshire, but not in the neighbourhood of
Holds.

Hobs. When he went to Mayfield, to make his adieus to Mr. Searle, that worthy man lamented that it had not been in his power to take Melbourne as his own curate, but that he had found, on his arrival there, a worthy man, with a deserving wife and large family, already established in that situation, from which it was utterly impossible he should remove them, delighted as he should have been to have shared with his beloved pupil the labours and profits of the ministry.

After a short visit, then, Melbourne departed to his cure, and felt rather forlorn at being thus entirely separated from all his former connections, and left to act for himself, independent of all check, all controul. The parish to which he belonged was large and populous, and having been early taught, by Mr. Searle's excellent example, the duties of a parish priest, he found occupation enough on his hands to endear to him still more fondly those hours of leisure which he felt himself at liberty to devote to his favourite pursuits. He dignified his hours of vacant enjoyment

enjoyment with literary study, and became more than ever enthusiastically devoted to poetry. Having, in the vicinity of his residence, scarcely any being who was a fit companion, he resumed with avidity all his solitary amusements, his long lonely walks, his ardent reveries, his poetical flights, in all of which the image of Julia was his companion and his muse, yet never did he suffer these pursuits, which he considered merely as resources in the hour of idleness, to trench upon the full performance of parochial duties. The young parson was adored in the parish; he was the comforter of the unhappy, the resource of the unfortunate, the nurse of the sick, the appeaser of quarrels; to him the people applied in all cases of difficulty and uneasiness, and from him none ever went wholly unrelieved away; the soothing kindness of his manner was as healing a balsam as that pecuniary relief, to distribute which, his will was ampler than his means.

He

He had lived in this useful retirement for nearly a twelvemonth, without seeing any families with whom he could wish to form a friendship,—indeed, though there were several large houses in the neighbourhood, the distance from London had occasioned them to be pretty much deserted during the spring and summer, nor had the autumn brought back their inhabitants, who were gadding about at different watering places, but some of whom talked of coming down about Christmas. Melbourne looked upon this prospect as wholly indifferent to him, and indeed hoped it would be so, for his present calm retirement had soothed and composed his mind into a gentle and unrepining melancholy, by no means unpleasing. From this state of quiescence, however, he was one day roused by the following letter:—

“ TO THE REV. HENRY MELBOURNE.

“ Dear and unsuspected architect of my felicity, who have so long been working in secret to establish that which I thought lost
for

for ever, come and share the happiness you have bestowed. There is a living in my neighbourhood, and in my gift, which is become vacant, but which I have destined for Melbourne ever since I had a prospect of the power I now enjoy;—come, see and bless the work of your own benevolence;—my Arabella, for mine she will be, declares she shall not think our marriage valid, unless performed by Melbourne;—yes, Melbourne, your secret efforts have succeeded, I am restored to the friendship of my noble Fortescue, to the tender love of my adored Arabella;—and to you—yes, my excellent friend, to you I owe these recovered blessings. I am absolutely too wild with joy to write more, than that I am

“Your’s most affectionately,

—“CHARLEY.”

Inclosed in the same envelope was another letter which Melbourne read with equal emotion. It was from Colonel Fortescue.

“How

“ How shall I ever sufficiently thank you, most excellent Melbourne, for the noble temerity with which you dared to unveil to me the prejudices I had so long entertained!—yes, Melbourne, you are entitled to my warmest gratitude, and while I press my recovered Davenport to my bosom, while I see my Arabella’s countenance resuming the glow of health, and the sparkle of vivacity, I feel all the weight of my obligations to you. In pursuance of the promise I gave to you, I made several enquiries respecting the infamous falsehood which had alienated me from my friend; I had, however, obtained no satisfactory intelligence when your letter and enclosure reached me at Edinburgh; I then believed Davenport guilty to the full extent of the charges against him, and I believe my letter to you sufficiently disclosed the acrimony of my mind. The letter which seemed to you so convincing a proof of your friend’s innocence, to me only strengthened the supposition of his art, and I felt further than ever removed from regaining my former

sentiments for him. Arabella thought differently; she surprised me one day examining an epistle I thought so curious a proof of the duplicity of his mind, and drew from me an account of the paper, and the means by which I obtained it;—her judgment upon it was favourable; I pardoned the error of her affection, and even promised to enquire still farther. I had the happiness a very few weeks ago to discover the innocence of my friend on the one important point that had so cruelly blackened his character, and we were restored to each other a few days previous to the death of his uncle. I think I owe you these particulars, which Charlby tells me he is too much agitated to communicate clearly; and I trust you will give us all an opportunity of endeavouring personally to express the high sense we entertain of your friendly benevolence;—for my own part, Melbourne, allow me to say, that the firmness and intrepidity you discovered in what I then thought a bad cause, had obtained for you my warmest esteem, and I am ambitious

to

to be ranked in the list of your favoured friends, and most anxious to assure you that of those who have known you longer, not one feels a higher sense of your merits, nor more sincere good wishes for your future welfare, than does your affectionate friend,

“ A. FORTESCUE.”

In the envelope itself were the following lines traced by the fair hand of Arabella:

“ I should never forgive myself, Mr. Melbourne, were I not to bind up the tribute of my thanks with the offerings of your friend and my brother ! Ah ! Mr. Melbourne, they may say more, but do not imagine that they feel more ardent gratitude than

“ ARABELLA FORTESCUE.”

If ever packet was calculated to convey pure and unalloyed happiness to the heart, and if ever heart was capable of enjoying, even to rapture, the felicity it had established—this was that packet—and Melbourne's was that heart. He sat for some hours dissolved

in silent transport, contemplating alternately the different letters which had produced these exquisite sensations; when he awoke to the contemplation of his own affairs, he speedily arranged all his parochial business, and taking leave of his flock, who already loved him with sincerity, set forward on foot with pastoral simplicity to take possession of the living offered to him by Lord Charlby.

Lord Charlby's park, and the village dependant on it, which was the living appointed for Melbourne, were situated in a very beautiful part of Hertfordshire, and Melbourne calculated that he should reach the place of his destination on the third day. He was a good walker; it was his favourite exercise, and he kept up the habit constantly. He had calculated exactly, and in the morning of the third day found himself rapidly approaching a little village, from whence he was informed he had but twelve miles further to go to the place whither he was bound. The name of Macartney on the sign struck him, and he found himself on the very spot where

where his last memorable interview with Julia had taken place. A thousand emotions fluttered in his bosom at the sight of that inn door, at which he had assisted her into her chaise; and as he had apprized his friend that he should be with him either that evening or the following morning, he determined to avail himself of the leisure he had, and indulge himself in a reverie on the self-same common where Julia had sought him, soothed and comforted him, like an angel of peace. He ordered a dinner at the inn, and wandered forth, while it was preparing, to revisit a place so dear to every feeling of his heart. "Ah! dearest Julia," thought he, "your words were indeed prophetic; you told me that my distress—my disgrace would speedily pass away like a troublesome dream,—and indeed all the misery which then distracted me almost to madness, has vanished like a vision of the night; but the blessed impression of your kindness, of your sympathy, has become stronger every hour." In reveries and soliloquies like this, Melbourne
G 3 passed

passed a most delightful hour, and availed himself of the long evening he had before him to write a full narrative of the whole business to Mr. Searle, from whose residence, he rejoiced to think, he should now not be above half a day's journey.—Alas! from Julia he seemed more completely separated than ever; he concluded her resident at Holts, and had planned a pedestrian journey into that neighbourhood to make her a visit, for he recollected Miss Willis's former general invitation to him, and would probably have availed himself of it; but this speedy removal, which Lord Charlby had so earnestly pressed, rendered his plan abortive.

Early the following morning he pursued his journey, and before noon found himself at the gates of Charlby Park.

CHAP. X.A BOOTLESS ERRAND—NEW
ACQUAINTANCE.

MELBOURNE was received by his friends with a tender welcome that wholly conquered his own selfish regrets. Never did three beings appear happier than did Lord Charlby, Colonel Fortescue and Arabella, and the thanks, praises, and caresses they all bestowed upon Melbourne, were peculiarly gratifying to his heart. In a very short time he had the satisfaction of confirming the felicity he had so greatly promoted, by tying the indissoluble knot which for ever interwove the fortunes of Lord Charlby and Arabella.

Arabella. Yet amidst his own security and happiness, the feeling Lord Charlby forgot not the undecided situation of his friend. He enquired into all the particulars of every interview that had passed between him and Julia, and confirmed with the most sanguine predictions the hopes which occasionally arose in Melbourne's bosom;—"and now," said he, "dear Melbourne, that you have a secure independency, to which to invite your beloved, hasten and finally end all your doubts; lose no time in urging a suit which Julia cannot refuse if she values her own happiness."

"Alas! my friend," replied Melbourne, "you are now as much too sanguine in my case, as you formerly thought me in your's; do you reflect, that I know not where to seek Julia? that I have no right to seek her?"

"As for your ignorance of her abode, Melbourne," replied his Lordship, "that is a plea I can by no means admit; there are methods of discovering the residence of any one whom we truly wish to find, and as for
the

the point of etiquette, it will be time enough to settle that when you are at her feet. A few weeks you shall devote to us, and to settling yourself quietly and comfortably in your new habitation, and then set forward, my good Quixote, on your voyage of enquiry, and return not without the damsel."

Melbourne shook his head at a plan so easily arranged, but forbore to combat the zeal of his friend. He felt that he had yet another point to settle, even were he secure of Julia's affection, and that was to him a point of great delicacy and equal importance. He felt it necessary not merely to mention his design to Lord George Montague, but to be satisfied that the execution of it would not give a pang to his friendly bosom; for he could not have enjoyed peace, even in the arms of Julia, had it occasioned one unpleasant sensation to the bosom of his friend. Before, therefore, he at all thought of seeking or enquiring after Julia, he rode over to Mayfield, to seek or make some occasion for a private conference with Lord George,

determined to sift his friend's feelings to the very bottom, and if the slightest degree of reluctance manifested itself, he felt sufficiently heroic to abandon Julia for ever! Probably, when he formed so disinterested a resolution, he had no doubt of Lord George's firm and complete affection for Lady Susan, riveted as it had been more firmly by the birth of a lovely boy, now some months old. Near their beautiful residence, Melbourne overtook Lord George and Lady Susan on horseback, returning from an airing, and they proceeded to the Lodge together. Lady Susan expressed her joy at seeing Melbourne so opportunely, "for now," said she, "my dear Lord George, you will be enabled to present him to your uncle Montague."

This was the very man to whom Melbourne had so earnestly wished to be introduced when on the Continent with Lord George, whom Mr. Searle had formerly known, and loved so well, and who was lately returned to England with his wife and family, and was with them at present on a visit to his nephew Lord George.

In

In the grounds they met young Shirley Montague, Melbourne's former sag at Eton, who had not quitted Oxford, but who still retained his early predilection for Melbourne. He welcomed him with sincere joy, and was delighted with his company.

Melbourne found his young friend much improved in every outward grace, and in his whole manner and countenance, giving the fairest promise of equal internal merit. Young Montague assiduously hastened forward to the house, to announce the arrival of his often talked of friend, and returned with a little sister in each hand, lovely as cherubims, and graceful as fabled nymphs. Melbourne, who doated on children, caressed these engaging little creatures with such hearty good-will, that Lady Susan laughing, said, "Remember, Melbourne, I shall be jealous if you do not kiss my boy as heartily." In the saloon they found Mr. and Mrs. Montague, with another daughter, two years younger than Shirley, and Melbourne was introduced and received with a partial kindness that proved he

had been previously the subject of friendly conversation. He found Mr. Montague a man who seemed to meet his ideas of uncommon excellence; his air and manner were lofty and dignified, without being proud or reserved; his countenance was at once penetrating and benevolent, and his eye spoke quick comprehension and deep research. He felt instantly inclined to love and venerate a being whose appearance gave such promise of exalted character; and to Mrs. Montague he was no less attracted by every feminine grace and gentle charm.

This admirable couple were neither of them past the prime of life, and Mrs. Montague, in particular, retained a degree of youthful beauty, which made her more resemble the sister than the mother of the manly Shirley and the lovely Emilia, the elder daughter, whose animated face spoke a mind alive to every quickly varying feeling. The kind and elevating notice of this amiable group spoke so forcibly to the heart of Melbourne, that he was already quite at his ease

ease with them, when Mr. Searle entered the room. He had been invited to join the family party every day during the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Montague, and nothing could have happened so pleasantly to cheer his drooping spirits, as the renewal of his early friendship, of which he had the singular happiness to find Mr. Montague retained as tender a remembrance as himself.

The hours flew rapidly in such agreeable company, and Melbourne found it impossible to return to Charlby that night, as had been his intention. He had not yet found means to say a syllable to Lord George on the subject nearest his heart, and he accompanied Mr. Searle to Mayfield. He felt it now in his power to communicate to that worthy man the whole history of Davenport and Arabella; and in the warm applauses which Mr. Searle bestowed on his conduct in the affair, his heart received a new gratification.

His permanent and competent establishment too, within so easy a distance, was another cause of rejoicing, and Melbourne could
not

not but own to himself, that his prospects began to brighten; he seemed now only to want a more assured hope of obtaining Julia than he could derive from the sanguine predictions of Lord Charlby, who seemed almost to have changed characters with him, and to have adopted, as he had formerly recommended to him, "Hope," for his motto! As parochial business recalled him to Charlby the following day, he rode over to Lord George's early in the morning without Mr. Searle, and fortunately observed him fauntering alone in the grounds. He welcomed Melbourne with cordiality, and they agreed to pursue their ramble together. Lord George acknowledged himself completely happy, enumerated the various blessings he possessed; gratefully recognized Melbourne's assistance in placing him in so enviable a situation, and himself led to the subject on which his friend wished to converse, by asking, "if he knew any thing of Miss Dalrymple," adding, "that he hoped she either was or would be married to some man that deserved her."

"It

"It would not now, then, my friend," said Melbourne cautiously, "give your heart the slightest pang to know Julia was in the arms of another?"

Lord George, with perfect serenity, answered, "that it would not, that he was completely cured of his passion for Julia, that his whole soul was devoted to Lady Susan, who was," as he fervently expressed himself, "an angel."

Though one grand difficulty was thus seemingly removed, Melbourne yet found great embarrassment in opening his mind to his friend; the charge of self-interest, which might have appeared to actuate him in his former counsel to Lord George, fortunately as that advice had terminated, seemed as if it would for ever close his mouth on the subject, and he felt, that though he could never make Julia his wife without apprizing Lord George of it, yet he was incapable of explaining how long and how tenderly he had been attached to her; he had totally forgotten that he had answered his friend's question only by
2 another

another question, till Lord George repeated it, " Then you do not know any thing now of Miss Dalrymple ? or is she married ? "

Had Lord George observed Melbourne's countenance while he spoke, its varying hues must have avowed that some secret history existed ; but he had no suspicion, and therefore made no examination ; and when Melbourne said, " he believed she was not married, " Lord George seemed disposed to let the conversation turn on other subjects. He even adverted to Melbourne's promotion, generously rejoiced that Lord Charlby had been more fortunate than himself in so rapidly providing for him, announced his intention of taking Lady Susan to form an acquaintance with Lord and Lady Charlby, and dwelt on the pleasure he promised himself from cultivating an intimacy with them.

Melbourne had fully intended to promote a sociable acquaintance between two families so dear to him, and so suited to each other ; and therefore listened with pleasure to this proposal, though it led further than ever
from.

from the subject he wished to discuss. How to get back again to Julia Dalrymple he could not imagine, and was still concerting schemes for re-introducing her name, when they were joined by Shirley and Emily Montague, who said, "the party within hoped Mr. Melbourne did not mean to steal away without entering the Lodge."

It was impossible to avoid accepting so flattering an invitation, though Melbourne had determined not to go in, but return immediately to Charlby; however, they now all entered the house together, and so long a time passed in general and amusing conversation, that at length Melbourne was obliged to rise abruptly, and, though sorry to leave so agreeable a society, to mount his horse, and make the best of his way home.

CHAP. XI.

A WONDERMENT.

MELBOURNE was much charmed with every individual of the family of Montague, to whom he had been introduced by a journey which had so totally failed of its real intention, and consoled himself for his disappointment, by reflecting that it was always in his power to repeat the experiment, and that he was not likely to find it necessary to be very rapid in sounding his friend's heart and affections, as Julia herself was yet an immeasurable distance from him. He resumed his old habits of life, and mingling solitary employments with the agreeable society, to which he was always most truly welcome,

welcome, at Charlby Park, pursued the rational and manly studies of which he had laid the first foundations under Mr. Searle, and which he had further cultivated at Cambridge. Though fond of literature of every kind, poetry, modern and classical, and all the elegant and amusing studies that contribute to form the taste; Melbourne's decided partiality led him to the nicest investigation of every thing that bore the name of moral philosophy—the science which exalts the heart, and dignifies the internal man.

As on every account his present situation was pleasing to him, both on account of his vicinity to all his dearest friends, and of its being in a very pleasant country, though not adorned with the majestic features that so forcibly impressed the environs of Linwood on his memory; he began to arrange his books in his little parsonage, and to model every thing about him according to his own ideas of comfort. The occupation amused him, for while he executed some improvements, and planned others, the image
of

of Julia smiled approbation, and blessed his labours. A few days brought Lord George and Lady Susan over to Charlby Park;—the natural consequence of this first meeting was a determination to meet very frequently in future, and Melbourne felt that he needed not to be premature in his attempt. He was flattered by the accounts both his friends were eager to give of the partial favour with which Mr. and Mrs. Montague had seen him. Some weeks passed on in this calm and pleasant manner, when Lord George and his family removed rather suddenly on a visit to the Duke and Duchess of G——, at an estate of their's in a very remote part of the kingdom, and not having time to call at Charlby Park, sent a letter expressing their regret, and announcing their intention not to return to the lodge until the following spring, but to go from their visit to London for the season:—that season also carried Lord and Lady Charlby to town, and Melbourne was left to experience the permanent advantages of his partiality for solitude. Of the villagers,

gers, his parishioners, there were none that could break, to his advantage, the uniformity of his lonely occupations, therefore, though he busied himself in every parochial duty, he sought not society where it could not exist for him. The only acquaintance he had at all cultivated, was a clergyman in a village at some distance, who one terribly bleak Saturday sent a request to Melbourne to officiate for him the very next day, as immediate and pressing business called him to London; this, though inconvenient, Melbourne contrived to arrange, and finding means to supply his own church, rode over in the morning through a heavy snow, with the pleasant accompaniment of a keen easterly wind, to the parish where he was to do duty. He found the church larger, and the congregation more numerous and more splendid than his own, and among some of the most distinguished persons there, saw a lady whose very pleasant countenance appeared perfectly familiar to his recollection, though he could attach to it no name;—it appeared too that
the

the lady knew him, for she kept her eyes unceasingly upon him, and whenever decorum did not absolutely forbid it, she threw an air of recognition into her features, which went near to distract and confuse the young parson.

When the service was over, he remained some few minutes by the vestry fire; and while by some unknown concatenation the idea of Julia was linked with this lady, he asked the clerk who the lady was in the pew immediately opposite the pulpit:—the clerk, who was of a taciturn disposition, only replied, “Her name is Waveney.” The name gave Melbourne no idea at all, and he further asked, if she was married. The uncommunicative clerk replied, that she was not, and Melbourne felt convinced that he never could have seen her before. He never had known any body of the name of Waveney, and was wholly unconscious of ever having heard it before. He prepared, however, to emancipate the clerk, and leave the church, and in the church-porch he observed this very lady waiting evidently for him.

The

The moment he approached, she exclaimed in the most sociable manner, "How do you do? I am delighted to see you, Mr. Melbourne; I thought I should have been frozen to death with waiting for you; but I was determined to run away with our new parson, and kill the whole congregation with envy."

Melbourne bowed and hesitated; her manner, her face, his memory acknowledged, but never had he known a Miss Waveney. "Come," added she, "you may as well obey with a good grace; I am determined you shall warm yourself at Waveney Hall."

Still undecided as to his opinion of his fair inviter, Melbourne saw she had claims to the attentions of every well-bred man; yet there was something too absurd in the idea of a parson's engaging in a doubtful affair, and the imagination caused a certain archness to rise to his eye, which the lady observed—"Nay," said she, returning his expressive look, "I shall conquer at last; so you may as well yield with a good grace; will

will you put me into the chariot, or shall I assist you?

Melbourne now for the first time observed a chariot waiting at the church-door, and a servant in a very smart livery holding the door of the carriage. He presented his hand to the lady, and when she was seated, she renewed her invitation to him to enter, which he obeyed, and Miss Waveney merely saying, "Home," to the servant, drew up the glasses, and the chariot proceeded.

"Do you mean to continue thus obstinately silent all the way home, Mr. Melbourne," said Miss Waveney, "we have a mile and a half to go, and I fear you will be asleep ere we reach the end of it, unless you let loose your tongue."

"Faith," said Melbourne, "I never was less disposed to sleep in my life; curiosity, fair lady, is a great foe to the drowsy god."

"A gallant answer that, however," said Miss Waveney, "so you really do not know me, and the only stimulus that can keep you from sleep during an unexpected tête-à-tête is then, your curiosity!"

"I did

"I did not say," replied Melbourne, bowing, "that it was the only stimulus."

"Well," said Miss Waveney, "however, as an excuse to your ingenuity and your patience, I will allow you to put in practice every means you can devise for discovering who and what I am, and surely such a search after truth may serve to amuse you during a quarter of an hour's drive."

"I would rather," said Melbourne drily, "you would acknowledge the truth, and leave me to seek the amusement my own way."

"No, no," said Miss Waveney, "it will be my amusement to see you beating about the bush, and perpetually losing the scent. I will, however, promise you a dinner and a bed, for the weather threatens to be too inclement for you to return to-night, and I am not sure that your patience or your ingenuity will not receive a higher reward than either the dinner or the bed."

Melbourne gazed again at his lovely companion, with an intention to recollect where

he had seen her, and forgot that he was gazing more earnestly than politeness allowed.

"Really," said Miss Waveney, colouring, "if I had not a great deal of assurance, you would put me quite out of countenance:—surely you have now perused my face enough to have formed your opinion; what do you think of me?"

"All that is out of thee," said Melbourne, "is most rich, most rare."

"And if," added Miss Waveney in the same strain, "pray go on Mr. Melbourne, and make me out 'alone the Arabian bird,' nor heed the injustice to any others of my sex."

"Positively, lady," said Melbourne, "I cannot understand you."

"I do not intend you should," replied Miss Waveney, "nor will I give you the least clue to assist you; so unless your own ingenuity brightens, or you find somebody more obliging than myself, this charming perplexity may continue for an indefinite time."

"Tell

"Tell me," said Melbourne, "have I not seen you before?"

"And then," said Miss Waveney, "and then,

"Tell me where, gentle Shepherd, tell me where!"

"Have you been long a resident in this neighbourhood?"

"Only a few months," replied Melbourne.

"And is your abode far from this place?" resumed the lady.

"I think the distance is about nine miles," answered Melbourne.

"Judging by the measurement, I presume your residence is at Charlby?"

"Exactly so," said Melbourne.

"Perhaps you know the young Lord Charlby?"

"He is one of the most intimate friends I have in the world," answered Melbourne.

"There has been something particular in his history, has there not?" said Miss Waveney, "of which by parcels I have something heard, but not distinctly."

"You have heard, I doubt not, Lady," replied Melbourne, "circumstances to the disadvantage of his character; but I dare to assure you the intelligence was all unfounded, and there exists not in the world a worthier or more honourable being than Lord Charlby."

"And Lady Charlby," said Miss Waveney, in an enquiring tone.

"Is an amiable, lively, and lovely woman."

"I fear," said Miss Waveney, looking with some anxiety at the horses, "those poor animals will be overheated, the coachman drives so unmercifully fast."

Melbourne, who thought no vehicle had ever moved so slow, assured her there was nothing to apprehend, for they scarcely went out of a walk.

"Nay," said Miss Waveney, "though you are impatient to arrive at the end of this curious tête-à-tête, in which you leave it so wholly to my poor brain to furnish conversation, I cannot, even to gratify your eagerness,

ness, have my poor horses injured; and the roads are becoming extremely heavy with the snow."

As she spoke, however, they were turning in at the gates belonging to a very handsome mansion, which Melbourne, to his infinite joy, found was Waveney-Hall. Several servants came to receive their mistress; a good fire blazed in a large and lofty hall, and they were ushered into a drawing-room of very ample dimensions, furnished in an antique style, (as indeed the whole house bore evidence of antiquity), but conveying every idea of comfort and hospitality. To the servant who opened the door for them, Miss Waveney gave orders to carry refreshments into her dressing-room, and to have the carriage ready to go to church in the afternoon, adding, that she should not dine till after evening service. All these particulars announced his fair entertainer to Melbourne as a person of some consequence, but nothing that he saw or heard could lead him to form the slightest conjecture of her identity;

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indeed all that he had seen and heard, seemed to contribute to mislead him, for her face he perfectly recognized, but her name and all her appendages were so entirely new to him, that they baffled imagination, and misled memory.

"Come," said she at length, "we shall find a good fire, and sandwiches besides in my dressing-room," and she led the way upstairs.

When they had reached the top, she pointed to a door, saying, "that is the room, Mr. Melbourne; I will wait on you in a few minutes," and turned into another apartment. Melbourne opened the door she had pointed out, and entered a small cabinet, furnished with the most exquisite taste, full of the most delicate and curious ornaments, hung round with elegant drawings of every kind, and the walls painted in fanciful Arabesques; large mirrors at the opposite sides of the room enlarged it to four times its real extent, and Melbourne was still gazing at its varied beauty when the door opened, and he turned round

round to pay to Miss Waveney the tribute of admiration her cabinet demanded. When he turned, however, instead of expressing his admiration, or any more predominant feeling, he stood silent and thunderstruck, and after a pause, could say no more than "Is it possible?" The lady seemed equally surprised with himself, for she only exclaimed—"How is this, Melbourne?"—"Oh Julia!" cried Melbourne, "how came you here?"

"I might well retort the question, Melbourne," said she, "and ask how you came here; but be that as it will, I am glad to see you."

He flew to her, took her not reluctant hand, pressed it to his lips—to his heart, and forgot that any such beings existed as either Miss Waveney or Lord George Montague. All the particulars of his last unexpected meeting with Julia now rushed upon his memory, and tears filled his eyes. "Oh Julia!" exclaimed he, "what do I not owe to you! but for you—"

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"My good friend," said Julia, covered with blushes, "let us not now resume—tell me, how came you here?"

"With Miss Waveney, I believe," said Melbourne, "but I scarcely know; explain, I beseech you, how I happen to meet with you."

"Good heaven!" said Julia, "could you come hither with Miss Waveney, and not expect to meet with me?"

"What was there in Miss Waveney to lead me to think of you? she never mentioned you," said Melbourne.

"Is it possible," said Julia, with much surprise, "that you did not know Caroline?"

"Miss Willis!" exclaimed Melbourne, with the air of a man who has just found the object of his search; "the mystery then is clear enough."

"You know," said Julia, again blushing, "I told you in our last hasty rencontre, that I was on my way to Caroline."

"You did so," replied Melbourne, "but I fancied you going down to Holts,—and a thousand

thousand times since have blamed myself for not making further enquiries;—and have you resided here ever since?"

"Ever since," answered Julia.

"And I," exclaimed Melbourne, in a tone of regret, "have been living within nine miles of you for these last seven months."

"Have you!" said Julia, in nearly the same tone, "where are you resident?"

"Her question he heard not; the first two little sympathising words had absorbed his whole soul, and he was again caressing the hand he had not relinquished, when Miss Wayeney herself came in.

"Ah!" said she, gaily, "your recollection has been more faithful here I find.—Perhaps now you have discovered my mystery."

"Yes," replied Melbourne, "I know you now for my friend in former times; I have not forgotten my obligations to you, and it is not above eight months ago that I meditated availing myself of your well-remembered invitation to Holts.

"Oh Julia!" said the lively Caroline, "I have been so entertained with this poor perplexed being in the carriage, I wish you could have seen his whole countenance, so expressive of curiosity, impatience and wonderment. To tell you the truth, I believe he thought me very brazen; indeed, he almost said as much."

"And pray," said Melbourne, "what could I conclude of a lady who professed herself determined to run away with a man who felt no inclination to be run away with?"

"And what do you think," said Miss Waveney, archly, "I can conclude of a gentleman who receives with so much coldness a lady's advances. Perhaps, Julia, you can answer my question;—do you not think the poor devil must be in love?"

Melbourne and Julia blushed equally at this remark, and the lively Miss Waveney pursued the blow, exclaiming in a solemn tone—

"Guilty! upon my honour."

Melbourne

Melbourne however, recovering himself, said something to Julia in a half whisper, which did not assist her recovery, and Miss Waveney assiduously handed sandwiches to each of her friends; then willing to end the confusion she had caused, she renewed to Melbourne her invitation to dinner, and her offer of a bed, and kindly took the chief part of the conversation upon herself, informing him, that an uncle of her's had left her that house and park, and an ample fortune, on condition of her abandoning the name of her forefathers, and adopting that of Waveney—a name which her said uncle had himself assumed on espousing the former heiress of Waveney Hall, and a name, added she gaily, which any man must adopt, who in marrying me does not wish to get rid of the incumbrances annexed to the name—and, alas! I fear those incumbrances will appear to most men the most desirable part of the bargain.

“They will judge very ill of Miss Willis who think so,” said Melbourne.

“Upon my word,” answered Caroline, “I wish you joy; you have really recovered some degree of presence of mind, and know how to make me a civil answer.—Come, as you are become so agreeable, you shall be rewarded in the evening with the history of Julia’s liberation from the Trebisons—that notable event in which you were so desirous to assist.”

At this intimation every atom of colour forsook Julia cheeks, and she said in a faltering voice, “You know, dear Caroline, there is no history to relate; Mr. Melbourne’s own conversation taught me to feel both my own independence, and the necessity of exerting it situated as I was.”

“Nay, nay,” said Caroline, “I should like to have my friend Melbourne fully informed; but there is not time now; the roads are becoming worse every moment, and we must allow the horses time to convey us to church.”

She rang the bell, ordered the carriage round, and the trio all repaired to the church,
and

and afterwards Melbourne accepted with joy Miss Waveney's welcome offer of a dinner and a bed. Julia, however, refused all enquiry as to the particulars of her emancipation, and Melbourne, seeing her really reluctant, forbore to press his questions. The hours passed away in a delight he had seldom experienced. In social and allowed conversation with two amiable females, and one of those females his adored Julia, he forgot that he had ever been unhappy; and in his solitary meditations on his pillow, he so perfectly smoothed every difficulty, that he determined to go the very next day to London, unbosom himself to Lord George Montague, and then pursue the delightful prospects now opening before him. Even Melbourne's modesty could not doubt but that Julia saw him with a partial eye; her soul was superior to affectation or disguise, and though she ever treated him with the familiar ease of a beloved brother, yet at times a conscious glow overspread her cheek, a sudden tremor shook her frame, a tender softness

softness vibrated in her accents—signs which Melbourne, novice as he was, interpreted in his own favour; and when he met her in the morning at breakfast, his own animated countenance fully expressed the joyful hopes of his heart.

Miss Waveney failed not to notice his expressive looks, and rallied him in her arch way, telling him she was sure he had pleasant dreams; and if he would relate them, she would expound them, and Julia should help her, for Julia had a great turn for divination. “Nay, dear Julia,” added she, “do not look so serious; you shall tell your dreams too, and Mr. Melbourne shall help me to expound them. Lord bless these two simpletons! they are only fit to keep company with each other—they do nothing but blush.”

“Fie, Caroline!” said Julia, “you are really quite unmerciful;—I wish you had a little of the faculty of feeling for the blushes you raise.”

The breakfast over, Melbourne took his leave, asking Miss Waveney if he might not consider

consider her general former invitation to Holts as extending to Waveney Hall;—and Miss Waveney told him, she supposed that even if she did not allow this, he would resolve so to consider it, therefore she might as well not reduce him to the necessity of disobedience.

CHAP. XII.

AN ECLAIRCISSEMENT.

MELBOURNE pursued his resolution of going to London, for he began to think his own affairs drew near their crisis, and he was unwilling to let slip a single hour which might serve to confirm his renewed hopes of happiness; yet as he approached the abode

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of his friend, he began to feel a thousand trembling doubts as to the effect the intelligence he had to communicate would have on a passion apparently obliterated. He began to conjure up a thousand distressing phantoms, at which his sick imagination trembled. He feared Lord George would impute to selfish interested motives the advice he had formerly given to him, and he trembled lest he should find the least spark of affection for Julia yet lurking unextinguished in the secret corners of his heart. "Can it be possible," thought he, "that any man, once truly enamoured of such a being as Julia Dalrymple, can really and entirely conquer the love she had inspired; surely it must be as eternal as the graces of her mind, and the virtues of her heart; and I am going to awaken Lord George from the happy delusion into which he is now thrown: He now believes that his affections are all completely devoted to Lady Susan, and I am about to open anew all the wounds of his heart, and to recal to his remembrance

membrance all the agonies of former days. Oh cruel fate ! how am I involved !—I can move neither way without encountering some danger ; for it would be even worse to discover the dreadful truth when Julia was indeed my wife, than now that no irrevocable step is taken.”

This soliloquy had occupied Melbourne as he walked across the Park to Lord George's house which overlooked it ; and as he ended, he was joined by his friend, who had perceived him from the window, and cordially welcomed him to town. “ Lady Susan too,” said Lord George, “ will be delighted to see her friend Melbourne. I assure you, did I not love and esteem you very truly, I should be jealous of you with my wife.”

Melbourne's mind was just then unequal to receive this cheerful greeting with equal gaiety, and Lord George remarked his gravity. After he had seen Lady Susan and the child, he begged half an hour's conversation with his friend, who earnestly asked him if
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any untoward accident had occurred in which he could be of use to him.

Melbourne, agitated as he was with the ideas that had gathered force during his journey, felt it possible that all his fears might be wholly unfounded, and determined therefore to make one strong effort, and at once decide his fate. He took his friend's hand, and said earnestly, "Is it to be reckoned an untoward accident, dear Montague, if the sympathy which has hitherto united our hearts should prevail still further, and have taught me to love where you once loved?"

"Julia Dalrymple," cried Lord George. "Untoward, dearest Melbourne! could I have formed a wish on such a subject, it would have been that this event should fall out as it has done."

The sincerest joy flashed in Lord George's eyes as he spoke, and Melbourne's bosom was for ever relieved from the load that had oppressed it. At his friend's earnest request, he detailed to him all the particulars of his long and faithful attachment to Julia, and

and of the very flattering hopes he now entertained. "And yet," said Lord George, "for me you would have relinquished these hopes—for my success you would have exerted your utmost efforts, and even now you would not push your fortune, lest it should give a pang to the breast of your friend! Melbourne, what do I not owe to you? Can I ever sufficiently prove to you the fulness of my love and gratitude?"

Melbourne, at these words rushed into the arms that were extended to receive him, and while the two friends were yet locked in a sweet and felicitous embrace, Lady Susan, surprised at the length of their conference, for they had been closeted two hours, tapped at the door, and asked if they were both alive. Lord George flew to admit her, and though a sense of delicacy prevented him from fully explaining all Melbourne's conduct (of which so much had been grounded on the doubts he entertained of Lord George's firmness) he yet told her that he had been receiving new proofs of kindness from that

"inestimable

inestimable friend, to whom they both owed so much, and that he was happy to say that his future felicity was in a fair way of being fully established.

Lady Susan, smiling and blushing, said, "she supposed she might interpret this intelligence into an acknowledgment that he was going to be married."

"See, if that dear vain creature," replied Lord George, "does not imagine all our felicity depends on our getting married!—however, love, you have guessed right, for Melbourne is indeed——"

"Hold, my Lord," said Melbourne, "remember, if you please, I have not yet consulted the lady."

"You are rather premature then it seems, my dear Lord," said Lady Susan, "in your intelligence, though I think I may venture to prophesy that Mr. Melbourne will not ask to be refused."

"There, Melbourne," cried Lord George, "see if I had not some reason to be jealous of Lady Susan;—I am very glad you have an attachment elsewhere."

"Pray

"Pray do I know the Lady?" said Lady Susan.

"I believe you never saw her," said Melbourne rather hastily.

"But you have heard her name," said Lord George, taking the hand of his wife,— "yes, dearest Susan, you once heard her name."

Lady Susan hid her blushing face in her husband's bosom, as she pronounced the name of Julia Dalrymple, but suddenly recovering, she said, "Yes, I did once hear it, and to my having heard it, I think I owe all the happiness I have ever since experienced—happiness far beyond the usual lot of mortals. Mr. Melbourne will be fortunate," added she, resuming her sportiveness, "if he and his Julia are half as happy as they have made my Lord and me."

Lord George could only answer his lovely wife by the tenderest caresses; and Melbourne saw, with delight, that their felicity was indeed established on a permanent foundation.

For

For two happy days he remained a joyful witness of their mutual affection, and on the third returned to Charlby.

CHAP. XIII.

NEW ARRANGEMENTS.

TO Charlby, indeed, as his ostensible home, Melbourne returned; but the attraction at Waveney Hall was too strong to be long resisted; nor, indeed, did he endeavour to practise much self-denial on the occasion, but in a very few days paid another visit to the hospitable and lively Caroline. She received him with her usual good humour, and rallied him

him on the readiness with which he repeated his devoirs, asking him, with an arch smile, whether her vanity might not set down this quick return wholly to her own account; "for," said she, "Julia is really walking."

Melbourne assured her, with a bow down to the very ground, that Miss Dalrymple had at least an equal share with herself in attracting him again to the Hall; and Miss Waveney, in the most serious manner, thanked him for his extreme politeness.

Depending, however, on Caroline's friendship, he ventured to enquire into the particulars of Julia's quitting the Trebisons, and learned that her residence there had been embittered by a thousand indescribable circumstances, which, however, from many delicate considerations she had supported with uncommon patience till the libertinism of Trebison and his companions subjected her to insults impossible to be borne.

"She then," said Miss Waveney, "wrote me word of her determination to leave them entirely, and take shelter under my roof,

roof, trusting to the goodness of our conduct to render such a residence respectable, though neither of us were under the guidance of a husband. You may imagine, perhaps, Mr. Melbourne, that I accepted this proposal with the utmost readiness; but I assure you, I chid her for the idea, and commanded her rather to take shelter with one of the numerous adorers who had courted her favour while she remained with the Trebisons; but instead of an obedient answer to my judicious advice, my impertinent fugitive threw herself weeping and smiling into my arms, and said with her April face, 'Here I am, my Caroline, separated for ever from the Trebisons, and for ever united to you.' Ah, Julia! cried I, I fear the union with me will be as speedily dissolved as that with the Trebisons; I fear, my girl, you are of a fickle disposition, and now, Mr. Melbourne, you are come to make good my words. Till this rencontre with you, we have continued quietly enough with our sentimental retirement, not pestered by any of the Trebisonian

Trebisonian admirers ; but now, I foresee, you will speedily carry off my fair fugitive, and leave me again to my splendid solitude."

" I wish you may prove a true prophetess with all my soul," cried Melbourne, " and then you will feel yourself obliged to chuse a more permanent companion."

" And so," exclaimed Caroline, " you would persuade me that it is my good you consult in running away with Julia. I positively will talk to you no longer ; there is Miss Dalrymple just at the end of the walk ; run to her, and try if you can induce her, out of pure good-will to me, to leave me to my solitary cogitations."

As Miss Waveney with these words really left the room, Melbourne availed himself of the hint, and joined Julia in the garden. The clear frosty air, and the exercise of a long walk had given to her complexion a pure and brilliant colour, which heightened with a pleasurable glow as she beheld Melbourne. She welcomed him, as she ever did, with undisguised pleasure, and Mel-

bourne, now at the moment of deciding his future fate, feared he had been too sanguine, and presumed too much on the unaffected manners of early friendship. He answered mechanically to two or three trivial questions she put to him, and at last contradicted himself so very absurdly, that she could not help remarking it, and asking him what made him so absent.

The question brought all his heart's blood into his face at once, and with as sudden a revulsion drove it rapidly back, and left him pallid and ghastly; which Julia also observing, said kindly, "Surely you are agitated about something of consequence."

"Yes, Julia," said Melbourne, lifting his anxious eyes to her enquiring ones—"something to me of infinite consequence; I am going to try—the generosity—Ah Julia! I am going to try whether I have not deceived myself."

He gazed in her face as if he wished to read her answer there; yet scarcely was he conscious of the changing blushes that adorned

adorned her cheek, nor of the conscious sigh that struggled in her bosom.

“Why should I hesitate?” said he, hastily; “you are not now to learn, Julia, how dear you are to me—you must long have known the aspiring wishes I have cherished.—You are silent, Julia; what am I to fear?”

“Nothing,” whispered Julia, “you have not deceived yourself.”

“You do not then drive me from you—you do not refuse my love?”

“Heaven forbid!” said Julia; “I thankfully accept it, Melbourne.”

“And yet,” said Melbourne, “what right have I to presume, dearest Julia?—can you indeed forego all you are entitled to claim?”

“I can have no higher claim,” said Julia, “than to be beloved by an amiable and worthy man.”

To follow Melbourne and Julia step by step through the long conversation that followed, would be impossible;—it suffices then

to say, that after a conference of three hours, they appeared mutually satisfied with each other, and fully convinced of the title each had to the heart and affections of the other. Miss Waveney welcomed, and rallied them alternately with smiles and tears, and as Julia was superior to all foolish forms and unnecessary punctilios, and thought that when her heart was really given, further reserves were needless; every particular, even to the time of their marriage, was arranged with the assistance and concurrence of Caroline, who gently reminded Julia, when Melbourne was pleading with some prospect of success for an early union, that she was not of age until the month of May, and that though in all probability she had nothing to apprehend from any paternal claims, it would be as well to wait till that period, at which the laws of the land enabled her to dispose of herself. This arrangement was agreed to, and Melbourne was allowed to improve the interval as much as he pleased by a constant attendance at Waveney Hall. "And do not imagine,"

imagine," said Caroline, "that we always live in the disreputable manner we do at present; I have an aunt, of an age to sanction my establishment, who is constantly here, except that she would not break through a rule she has observed for many years of spending a long Christmas with some relations of her's."

Melbourne, delighted and rejoicing in his prospects, returned home to embellish his retirement with a thousand paradisaical imaginations; then returned again to Waveney Hall to dwell on the blissful reality. He hastened to make Mr. Searle and Lord George acquainted with the fair foundation on which his happiness now stood; and received from them both the most cordial congratulations. Lord Charlby too, to whom he communicated the pleasing intelligence, rejoiced in the accomplishment of his predictions. His frequent visits to Waveney Hall could not shew him more sense, more dignity, more sincerity and virtue in Julia's character than he had ever adored in it; but

the happy and unreserved commerce of two excellent hearts, unaffectedly attached to each other, sent him home more enamoured after every visit.

Mrs. Willis, the maiden aunt of whom Miss Waveney had spoken, returned to the Hall, and proved no unpleasant addition to the society. She was good-tempered, friendly, and obliging, and though her manners were rather quaint, and her habits rather stiff, yet her punctilio kept her from ever saying or doing any thing that could offend.

The Spring advanced with all her charms, and never had Melbourne thought it so lovely a season; every gleam of the sun brought a corresponding gleam of rapture to his heart, and every primrose that opened, and every snow-drop that blossomed, twined in his fancy into a garland for Julia. Lord Charlby, who with his happiness had resumed his enthusiastic love of the country, returned very early in the spring to Charlby Park, and pleased himself in superintending and embellishing Melbourne's improvements.

After

After every visit to Waveney Hall, Melbourne found some pleasing addition to his intentions, planned and executed by the taste and liberality of Lord Charlby. Scarcely could he believe his present prospects real, when he looked back on the years of suspense and despair that he had passed; scarcely, even now, could he believe that a being universally careffed and admired as Julia had been, could have reserved her hand and heart for him—an obscure unconnected individual, an unknown country Parson; yet so it was, and every night when he laid his head on his pillow, the conscious security of happiness, after keeping him waking in delightful reveries, soothed his slumbers with charming and ecstatic visions.

CHAP. XIV.

APRIL.

APRIL had already enamelled the fields with a thousand various and beautiful flowers, the trees were beginning to clothe themselves in their fresh livery of tender green; the black-thorn was covered with its silvery blossoms, and the birds were universally chaunting their lays of love. Melbourne looked at all Nature with a benevolent and grateful eye, and then pronounced himself the happiest of her children. In perfect content, in more than content, in the consciousness of exquisite felicity, he rode through the lovely country that led to Waveney Hall, reflecting that another three weeks would realize his warmest hopes, and confirm him

him in the possession of unalterable felicity. Already he saw the white chimnies of the Hall peeping through the mingling branches of the old avenue, and his heart anticipated the unaffected smile of his Julia, the gentle pressure of her hand, which even in imagination, thrilled to the very centre of his heart—the eloquent voice which spoke so plainly all the emotions of her bosom; and now, distinguishing the dressing room window, he thought he perceived her, as if watching for his approach: his heart bounded with increasing joy, and he pushed on his horse to shorten the few intervening moments before he should behold her. Suddenly in the avenue appeared Miss Waverley alight;—What could this mean?—rather surprised, he checked his horse, and Miss Waverley beckoned to him to alight; he obeyed. She bade him tie his horse to a tree, and follow her;—trembling with indescribable agitation, he obeyed, and when she had drawn him to a pavilion in the grove, Melbourne first broke the silence hitherto preserved between them, and enquired the meaning of all this.

"Melbourne," said Miss Waveney, "clouds have arisen to disturb your prospects; I hope," said she, "they will be only like those showery fleeces which even now skirt the horizon, and that an unclouded summer will still succeed."

"What can have happened," said Melbourne, "have I offended?"

"You have not offended," replied Caroline, "nor is Julia changed."

"Then," said Melbourne eagerly, "I revive; no other misfortune can reach my happiness."

"Be not too sanguine, Melbourne," said Miss Waveney.

"Oh Heaven!" said he, "Julia is ill—she is dying; Oh! lead me to her."

"No, no," said Caroline, "Julia is in perfect health, but you must not see her."

"Not see her!" exclaimed Melbourne, "not see my Julia!"

"No," said Miss Waveney, "but remember, Melbourne, Julia is well and constant, and bear with dignity and firmness what I have now to impart."

"If

"If Julia's health and heart are unaltered," replied Melbourne, "I think I can."

"They are," said Miss Waveney, "I solemnly assure you they are;—but a great obstacle has arisen; a person is arrived who pretends a right to direct her choice in marriage, and who has proposed another suitor."

"Oh Heavens!" cried Melbourne, "Mr. Dalrymple returned!"

"Even so," said Caroline; "he returned three days ago, possessed of immense riches, and leading by the hand a man to whom he says he owes every thing, and to whom he has long devoted the possession of his daughter."

"And Julia," cried Melbourne.

"Is as miserable as you are," replied Caroline. "Long hopeless of seeing her father alive, she yet feels with the utmost force the obligations of duty; and the transport with which she received the gradual confirmation that the stranger who came to Waveney Hall on Saturday, was indeed her sole surviving

parent, did honour to her heart. I believe for the moment, Melbourne, she forgot her engagement to you ; but not long was she suffered to forget it, for her father soon expressed his joy at finding her unmarried, as he had got a husband for her as rich as Cræsus, and who would make her as happy as the days were long. Julia forbore any reply ; she trusted that this early avowal of his intentions would not be found a fixed purpose, till he added, ‘ But indeed, if I had found you married, as you are still a minor, I should have left no stone unturned to get the marriage annulled ; however,’ continued he, ‘ I am glad to see you are likely to turn out an obedient child, and make no resistance to my will. I had been told I was very likely to find you rebelliously disposed ; I had been told a history of a parson you were going to be married to, but I am glad there is nothing in it.’ Julia’s pallid cheeks,” said Miss Waveney, “ gave evident testimony to the truth of the history her father reported, and he observing her change of countenance, said, in a stern manner,

manner, ‘ Why, how is this ? but now you were as rosy as a milkmaid, and now you are as white as a sheet ?’ Julia now, with a spirited exertion of which her ghastly look almost bespoke her incapable, said, ‘ I am obliged to own, Sir, that there is much truth in the story you have been told, and that a very few days will make me the wife of the clergyman you mention.’—‘ That they shan’t,’ retorted Mr. Dalrymple ; ‘ you shall never be his wife.’ But I need not oppress your heart, dear Melbourne,’ continued Mrs Waveney, “ with a too accurate detail ; at present, though we have a little succeeded in mollifying Mr. Dalrymple’s manners, we have not been able to soften him in your favour ; but surely no heart can long resist the persuasive softness of Julia. We have not yet seen Mr. Dalrymple’s intended son-in-law ;—he is expected to arrive in a day or two. Julia, dear suffering Julia, feared the effect this intelligence would have upon you if communicated by letter, and therefore requested me to watch for your arrival, and prevent your entrance.

entrance. All the desires of you at present, Melbourne, is not to seek to see her; I will give you daily intelligence of our proceedings, and I think your cause could not be entrusted to two advocates more disposed to serve you."

By not a single exclamation did the suffering Melbourne interrupt this heart-breaking narrative. When it was ended, he only said in broken accents, "Oh Miss Waveney! had we not waited for Julia's coming of age, she had now been mine beyond her cruel father's power; but it was the will of heaven: excuse me for a few minutes."

He rose from the seat where he had been sitting, and struck into a lonely path where he wandered for some minutes lost in intense thought. He almost determined to rush into the house, wrest Julia from her tyrannic father, and bear down every obstacle that might oppose their union;—he was even striding hastily towards the house with that purpose, when Caroline, who feared to leave him too long to his solitary reflections, followed the
path

path he had taken, and immediately guessing his purpose by his rapid progress, overtook him with speed, and laying her hand upon his arm, exclaimed, "What are you about, Melbourne?"

"I am going," said he, "to claim my wife!"

"Impetuous young man!" cried Caroline, "respect the requests of Julia; what good can you hope to effect by pursuing this desperate measure? You will only incense Mr. Dalrymple still more against his innocent daughter, and perhaps prompt him to utter curses."

"Forgive me, dear Caroline," interrupted Melbourne, "and aid with your counsel a being incapable of judging for himself."

"You have but one mode of conduct to pursue," replied Caroline; "return quietly home; you shall hear constantly from me how every thing goes on, and indeed, Melbourne, you may be convinced that your appearance before Mr. Dalrymple will only carry his rage to a dreadful extremity."

"Are

"Are his passions then so very furious?" questioned Melbourne.

"They appear wholly ungovernable," replied Caroline; "and whoever or whatever this man is whom he destines for the husband of Julia, he appears to possess all of affection that the old man's mind is capable of feeling."

"Has he then," cried Melbourne, "no natural sensations of affection towards Julia?"

"None that would stand the test of her disobedience," said Miss Waveney; "he seemed struck with her grace and figure when he first saw her, and bestowed some hasty commendations on her complexion; but of her real merits he seems incapable of judging."

"How came such a being," exclaimed Melbourne, "to give life to a Julia! Are you sure there is no mistake?"

"At first I doubted," replied Caroline, "the possibility of his being her father, but the proofs are incontrovertible; but, dear Melbourne, be persuaded; return to Charley; you

you shall have daily intelligence from me, and you may rest assured that we shall watch for every possible opening in your favour."

"Oh Miss Waveney!" said Melbourne, "do persuade Julia to relinquish at once her father, and his rich inheritance, and to seek shelter and protection in my arms."

"I have already," said Caroline, "hinted at the propriety of such a measure; but if you or I think to prevail with Julia to adopt it, we are yet strangers to the deep sense she entertains of filial duty, and of the delicate decorum necessary to be observed by young women."

"Alas!" said Melbourne, "I was hopeless of success, yet surely every feeling of affection and virtue would sanction such a conduct: what claim can——"

"Dear Melbourne," said Miss Waveney, "this is not a moment to argue a point of such importance; it would carry us too great lengths. Be advised, quit this place; our present situation is perhaps too violent to last, and you may depend on me for constant and circumstantial communication."

Melbourne

Melbourne still seeming disposed to linger near the house that contained his Julia, Miss Waveney represented to him that it was necessary for her to return, and that she should ill be able to quiet Julia's apprehensions, unless she could assure her that he was returning homeward. At this suggestion, Melbourne assumed a desperate courage, and determined to tear himself away; but wanted previously to obtain from Miss Waveney the mention of some period when he might be admitted to Julia's presence;—at length she convinced him how impossible it was for her to assign any period at which their present uneasiness might subside: and when she had seen him untie and mount his horse, she returned to the house, while he slowly paced along the avenue.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

INVECTIVES.

WITH very different feelings from those with which he entered the park, did Melbourne retrace his former steps. Where were now his visions of unalterable felicity? where were now the conscious hopes that gave a more elastic firmness to his tread? where the delightful prospects that doubled the eloquent lustre of his eye?

“All darken’d down

“To naked waste—a dreary vale of tears!”

YOUNG.

As he reached the end of the avenue, while the children from the Lodge were hastening

hastening with the alacrity of vacant youth to open the gate for him, he turned round on his horse, and pensively gazed again at the white chimnies, and seemed as if taking in his heart an everlasting farewell of the dear mansion. At length he passed the gate, and as he heard the latch rattle in its return, he felt as if forever shut out from all hopes of happiness; he let the reins fall on his horse's neck, and, absorbed in melancholy thought, heeded not the way he took, till at last the poor animal stopped entirely, and endeavoured to crop some of the herbage by the roadside. The cessation of motion, gentle as that motion had been, roused Melbourne out of his reverie, and looking around him, he perceived he had wandered a mile out of his way; and not being sure how he ought to turn to regain the lost road, he determined to return to the gate at Waveney Park, and set out anew: he therefore turned short about, and proceeding rather more briskly, was presently once more within sight of the Lodge and the gate; once more, almost involuntarily

tarily, he paused at that gate to take a survey, a last one, of those dear walks where Julia had so nobly and so speedily put an end to his alarm. As he stopped, earnestly gazing up the avenue, he overlooked an object much nearer to him, which was indeed no other than a gentleman on horseback apparently coming out of the very gate at which he stood, and attended by a servant, who advanced to open the gate. The stranger perceiving Melbourne's total inattention, vociferated in a very commanding tone, "Holla! you Mr. Parson, make way for a body to come through."

At this elegant address Melbourne indignantly surveyed the speaker, whom he could not doubt to be the father of Julia, or had any doubt existed, it would have been completely done away; when the person having come up close to Melbourne, exclaimed in the same gentle and gentleman-like style, "Damn you, are you the parson that comes a courting here to Julia? you look like a thief coming to steal other folk's property, and

and I can tell you, Mr. Black Coat, Julia will never be your's; she'll belong to another guess sort of a person than you, I can promise you."

Melbourne coolly said, " Sir, I did not attempt to insult you."

" No, by God," interrupted Mr. Dalrymple, " you'd ha come by the worst of it if you had, I can tell you; I'd ha pulled your black coat over your ears for you; you attempt to insult me! No, no, my lad, though I have not been long in England, I know too well who you are, to suffer you to insult me: you! the beggar's bastard that Macartney took into his house for charity!"

" You perhaps do not know, Sir," said Melbourne——

" I know too much for your good, I can tell you," interrupted Mr. Dalrymple; " I've heard of all your proceedings, even to your running away from College with a pretty girl, and being expelled for it; and you think of marrying Julia! No no, by God, no beggar's brat; no, nor no nobleman's bastard shall ever marry Julia."

" There

"There is however a period," said Melbourne calmly, "when even the tyranny of a parent ends."

"I'll take care," cried Mr. Dalrymple, almost choaking with rage, "I'll take care, I promise you, to secure my daughter's obedience for the whole of her life, whether I am alive or dead; what, shall a man slave and toil so many years in India, to have the fruits of all his labours snatched away by an insolent young rascal that somehow or other has got a black coat upon his back? Ah! Master Melbourne, there's many a wolf in sheep's clothing."

"You cannot be justified, Sir," said Melbourne, "in aspersing the character of a man of whom you know so little."

"I tell you I know too much of you," vociferated Mr. Dalrymple, "as much of you as you do of yourself. I do not know who your father and mother were—no more do you; you can't say you do; damn you, you are some beggarly bastard that must have drove the plough all your life long but for

Macartney's taking notice of you ; and what could induce him, I wonder, to do so to the prejudice of his own children ! He might have been sure the snake he warmed in his bosom would live to repay him by stinging some of his family ; but poor Macartney was never overburdened with sense. However, Sir, I demean myself too much in talking to such a vagabond ; please to remove yourself from these premises ; we suffer no loiterers here ;—if you are found lurking about in this neighbourhood, you shall be sent per force to your own parish : be gone—I know the authority of a gentleman.”

Hitherto Melbourne had preserved the respect which he felt due to Julia in his conduct with her father ; but when he saw him waving his horse-whip in a threatening attitude, and observed the opprobrious and taunting style in which the latter part of his speech was delivered, he felt all his irritable blood boil within him ; and extending his arm, caught hold of the horse-whip, and wrenched it from Mr. Dalrymple's grasp ;
then

then tossing it over the gate into the park, he resumed his station at the gate, from whence he had been gazing at the mansion, when so disagreeably interrupted. Words cannot do justice to Mr. Dalrymple's fury at this conduct; he endeavoured to vent it in oaths and imprecations, but was absolutely unintelligible from rage; his eyes seemed ready to start from their sockets, and every vein and every muscle were bursting with agitation. "Pull the fellow from his horse," at length cried he to the servant, "pull him off I say, and give him a sound thrashing."

"Please your Honour," said the man, "I must do no such thing."

"Then I will, damme," cried Dalrymple, instantly alighting, and giving his horse to the servant.

"Mr. Dalrymple," said Melbourne, "be advised and desist from this attempt. I am willing to preserve towards you the respect due to the father of Julia; do not oblige me to defend myself."

"You impudent scoundrel," exclaimed Mr. Dalrymple, "do you threaten me? What you a beggarly prig of a parson defend yourself!"

"An Englishman," cried Melbourne, "will not quietly submit to a thrashing; but I shall no longer contest the point with you," said he, putting his horse in motion. "To avoid all further irritation, of which there has been already too much, I shall betake myself speedily to my own home."

The hoarse voice of Dalrymple sent oaths and curses after him, long after Melbourne was out of hearing;—he reproached himself rather severely for not having obeyed Miss Waveney's repeated request of quitting the place, though in no other instance could he blame himself for the consequences of his meeting with Mr. Dalrymple. He took the road to Mayfield, determined to communicate to Mr. Searle the cruel change in all his prospects;—and by the time he reached that friendly and hospitable roof, the agitation of his mind had thrown him into a degree

degree of fever which alarmed his kind and affectionate friend: scarcely was he able to explain to Mr. Searle the rapid vicissitudes of his fortune, and the narration seemed to increase his feverish symptoms. He received from Mr. Searle the most soothing sympathy; but it was a case in which no conduct nor exertion of his own could occasion any alteration, and which, therefore, called for no counsel, nor could be alleviated by any resolution, but that which Mr. Searle had ever endeavoured to instil into his mind, "To bear with fortitude and resignation the different trials it may be our lot to meet with in this world."

"This indeed, my Henry," said the excellent Mr. Searle, "is a severe one, and there will be the more merit in supporting it with equanimity and composure. Oh Melbourne! you were arrived at a pitch of happiness too exalted to be borne with due humility; you had found your paradise here, and this chastening comes."

“ Most heavily,” interposed Melbourne, “ though what you advance, my most excellent friend, does not now calm my mind; it will sink into my heart, and I shall ever love and revere you, as much as I shall ever deplore this dreadful, this annihilating blow.”

Oppressed by indisposition, which, however, he strove to conceal, Melbourne retired early to rest; and though still feverish in the morning, yet so afraid was he of missing the promised communication from Miss Waveney, that he affected more composure and strength than he really felt, and mounting his horse, returned with slow pace, and yet suffering extremely from fatigue, to Charlby.

CHAP. XVI.**CORRESPONDENCE.**

“ TO THE REV. MR. MELBOURNE.

“ **I**MPRUDENT Melbourne ! how could you loiter near the bounds of Waveney Park, and expose yourself to a meeting with our furious inmate ? For heaven’s sake what has passed between you ? there is no comprehending accounts given by a monster absolutely mad with rage. His account and that of the servant who accompanied him differ entirely, and I am most inclined to believe the latter. I cannot imagine that you used threatening language, that you horsewhipped him with his own whip, that you attempted to pull him off his horse,

horse, though I can most readily believe that he deserved such treatment. The agitation of the wretch's mind has brought on a fit of the bile : our dear suffering Julia is his attentive nurse, though she is exposed to the eternal repetition of the most degrading epithets applied to you—scurrilities, of which, I dare say, you were indulged with a specimen. However, dear Melbourne, I trust that this brutal violence will defeat its own purpose, and force our dear Julia to relinquish her present dutiful plan of passive obedience and non-resistance.

“ She has this instant left me, and protests that she will not carry her obedience so far as to accept the husband her father has provided for her ; yet, injured and ill-treated as she is, she even now retains a tender concern for the honour of her parent : ‘ Dear Caroline !’ said she, ‘ be moderate ; spare the father of your Julia.’

“ Above all things, Melbourne, keep out of sight. In this free country a woman cannot be married by force ; and Julia, gentle and
resigned

resigned as she is, has sufficient spirit to resist tyrannical commands. I shall yet see these gathering clouds disperse, and returning sunshine gild your future prospects; in which hope, dear Melbourne,

“ I subscribe myself,

“ Your affectionate friend,

“ CAROLINE WAVENEY.”

This letter did not serve to give to Melbourne any energy wherewith to combat despair. Miss Waveney's habitual cheerfulness led her to treat his distresses with an air of levity which displeased him, notwithstanding the real friendliness of her heart: he trembled for the sufferings Julia was hourly exposed to from her brutal father, and a thousand times execrated the delay, but for which she would have been his wife. The exile to which he was condemned was intolerable, and the frequent intelligence that Caroline promised him was very insufficient to satisfy him;—he could not support the sight of Lord Charlby; he felt unequal to relate the whole

sad

sad story of his despair; he remained therefore at home and alone, wasting in dismal ruminations the tardy hours. The evening brought him another note from Miss Waveney.

“Alas! dear Melbourne, I fear our affairs are drawing to a dreadful crisis; the rage of Mr. Dalrymple against his daughter increases to an alarming degree. The altercations in which this day has passed have been most horrible—Julia is steady in her refusal of any husband but yourself, and her father, with the most dreadful imprecations, swears she shall become the wife of his friend;—he talks of taking her to London to-morrow, but be assured, Melbourne, that I will not lose sight of her; she shall not be left wholly in the power of such a monster. I wonder by what execrable ties he is thus firmly bound to the wretch whom he proposes as your substitute. Dear Melbourne, if you love Julia, be quiet; take no active steps; you can only do harm—do, my friend,
restrain

restrain your ardent temper, and be assured that nothing can be so acceptable to Julia as the conduct I recommend.

“ Rely on my friendship ; on the unalterable affection of Julia : hear her own words, and obey them—

“ Tell Melbourne,” says the dear girl, “ that I request him to be passive—that nothing would so cruelly aggravate my sufferings as any exertions he might make to alleviate them ; tell him to consider what must be the result of any such exertions.”

“ Obey the voice of Reason and Patience, dear Melbourne, and depend on the endeavours of

“ Your’s sincerely,

“ C. WAVENEY.”

All night long did Melbourne fix his burning tearless eyes on this heart-rending epistle ; not a single idea presented itself but that of absolute immitigable despair. When the morning dawned, his soul seemed to receive some new vigour, and he determined to go and rescue Julia.

"I will not," he cried, in a voice rendered resolute by misery, "I will not obey her cruel orders; I will not thus inactively leave her to the fury of her brutal father. What signifies the result? probably either her father's life or mine would be sacrificed; if it was his lot, it would rid the earth of a monster—if mine, my sufferings would be for ever at an end: and Julia! Oh Heaven!—no, it must not be risked—what would be her feelings? Oh inconsiderate wretched Melbourne! yes, I must sit down in powerless agony, and weep a destiny I am unable to cope with."

But no tears fell from his glowing eyes; he was denied that salutary relief, and his oppressed heart almost burst with its terrible load. At a very early hour another messenger arrived from Waveney-Hall, and Melbourne gazed at the packet without daring to open it; he felt the dreadful effect it was likely to have on him, and for some minutes suffered it to remain untouched on the table. Every look he cast towards it seemed

to

to annihilate his very life; the fibres of his heart withered, and while agony increased to such a degree as almost to separate the vital cords, he seized it with a desperate, yet trembling hand, and exclaiming, "I will know the worst," tore open the envelope. It contained two letters numbered on the outside; he had the fortitude to read first that marked with a (1), and found it as follows:—

"We are quitting Waveney Hall, dear Melbourne; whither bound I know not: but I follow in my own carriage at a distance that which contains our Julia. She writes herself. Ah! dearest Melbourne, arm yourself with fortitude to support the measure of your fate; would to God I could now offer you comfort, yet I think it must be reserved for you at some future period! These undeserved sufferings must even in this world be recompensed. Oh Melbourne! how have these few short days destroyed the fairest views of happiness! I have time for no more—Julia is getting

into the chaise; be careful of yourself, and may Heaven preserve you!

“ G. WAVENEY.”

“ P. S.” For Heaven’s sake remain at Charlby; I will write.”

More dead than alive, Melbourne opened Julia’s letter; but on seeing the words, “ Beloved Melbourne,” a copious shower of tears burst from his eyes, and he revived to take in the full consciousness of his misery.

“ Beloved Melbourne! receive the last farewell of your unaltered Julia! I am incapable of softening the fatal intelligence. Melbourne, we must meet no more—we must forget each other, yet is the heart, the soul of your Julia incapable of change. Judge then what she suffers in writing this tremendous sentence—A father’s curse! dare I encounter a father’s curse? that he solemnly swears shall be my portion if I take not of you a final adieu; even if, after his death, I dare to unite my fate with your’s, his curse will

will fall upon me ! I wonder at my calmness ; my feelings seem for ever withered ; yet, Melbourne, hear my solemn resolve—No force, no threats—not even the dreaded curse of my father shall make me give my hand to another. I should, by so doing, incur a still more fatal malediction, even that of Heaven. My father's curse would in that case fall only on myself ; I could brave it for myself, but shall I draw down its vengeance on you ? Beloved of my soul, take comfort ; your Julia soon will find it where only it now exists for her—in that calm abode where the weary are at rest !

“ Farewell, Melbourne ! farewell for ever !

“ Yet, Melbourne, let me add my earnest request—let me beseech you to take no steps to recover that wretched being who is torn from you for ever ! Our case, my friend, is desperate ! nor can any efforts make the least alteration in it—I have sworn not to incur my father's malediction. Alas ! Melbourne, miserable as you are, forbear to curse.”

Thus

Thus abruptly ended a letter on which the wretched Melbourne riveted his eyes for hours after they had lost all consciousness. Lost even to the sense of his exquisite misery, he remained holding the paper, and gazing on it with a vacant stare, in which situation he was found by Lord Charlby, who surprised at his long absence from the park, came to call on him, and finding him wholly insensible to his approach, sought for the cause of this dreadful situation in the fatal paper in his hand. Sufficiently did it explain the reason of Melbourne's alarming state. Lord Charlby soon perceived that he was extremely ill, and calling for assistance, had him conveyed to bed, and sent for the best medical assistance to be procured. Melbourne's state was pronounced highly dangerous by the good Dr. Lewson, who had ministered to the relief of Lord George Montague, and who felt more than common concern at the sight of poor Melbourne, whom he well remembered, in so very critical and alarming a state. For many days
Melbourne

Melbourne hovered between life and death ; but after a time his youth and strength struggled effectually with disease, and he gave symptoms of returning health. He eagerly asked for letters, but Dr. Lewson, who understood that the cause of this malady was seated in the mind, had forbidden him to open any letters ; and the disappointment this refusal occasioned him, threw him back into a degree of fever that re-awakened all their fears. When this was, the following day, reported to Dr. Lewson, he retracted his prohibition, and permitted him to see a letter while he remained in the room. There were, indeed, several from Miss Waveney, but one was thought a sufficient indulgence ; that which bore the earliest postmark was selected, and after extorting many promises of composure and fortitude, Melbourne opened it, and read as follows :—

April 30th.

“ We are arrived in London, dear Melbourne, after a speedy journey, and I have
taken

taken a lodging immediately opposite to the object of my attention. Our beloved Julia supports herself with a fortitude and resignation which I wonder at and admire; her father seldom suffers her for a moment out of his sight, and sometimes, at periods of silence, I can hear his dreadful voice even in my apartments; if he quits the room, Julia advances to the window, and we hold a silent melancholy conversation. She has not yet seen the husband her father has chosen for her, and I find he is so fearful of her escape, that he makes her sleep in a closet through his own bed-room. Ah! Melbourne, how little does he know the exalted soul of his daughter, which is capable of submitting to any duty, and which would not violate the compulsory oath she has taken not to incur his malediction, to gratify the fondest wishes of her heart! You shall hear regularly from me, though I know not to what purpose you should hear of us at all; there is no hope remains for you! Alas! Melbourne, I feel there is none, and from the bottom of my soul

soul! I sympathize with your misery. Bear your misfortunes with patience, emulate the fortitude of your Julia, and remember that nothing can be done. Give me
 "Your's most affectionately,

" C. WATNEY."

This letter had the salutary effect of producing tears, and Melbourne's agitated soul was certainly relieved. The remaining letters were put under the care of Lord Charby, to give to his friend as he should see him sufficiently advancing in his recovery, and in the course of a few days there was nothing more to fear for his bodily health, though his mind was sinking into a terrible dejection. He assumed, however, the shew of fortitude before his friend, and being now only liable to occasional visits from Dr. Lewson, his health was considered as restored, and Lord Charby put the letters into his hands.

Poor Melbourne eagerly busied himself in arranging them according to their dates, and then sat down to read the continued narrative

of his Julia's sufferings. He accused himself of possessing a most impenetrable heart, since it had not absolutely broken with such an attack ; and having now given orders not to be disturbed, opened that which was dated May 2d.

CHAP. XVII.

IN WHICH THE HISTORY PROCEEDS IN LETTERS.

LETTER I.

" TO THE REV. MR. MELBOURNE.

May 2d.

" **TERRIBLE**, dear Melbourne, have been our trials since I last wrote. I have braved the rage of Mr. Dalrymple, and am an inmate

inmate in his house, nor do I believe that without the support of friendship, our Julia could have sustained herself through the last three dreadful days. I perceived, on the first day that I made the attempt to introduce myself, that when the wretch had left the room, Julia presented herself at the window in tears; and clasping her hands in an attitude of supplication, cast her eyes towards heaven, as if imploring that succour which no earthly assistance could give her. I made her comprehend that I would come to her, and though I perceived that she despaired of my effecting my purpose, yet it was evident that my presence would be a consolation to her. I saw a coach drive to the door, and I watched the event. Our tyrannic monster entered and drove away, and seizing the opportunity, I darted across the street, and by persuasions, and the still more prevailing influence of bribes, obtained admittance;—but when within the house, I was scarcely nearer to Julia; for the wretch had locked her into the room, and had even locked and taken away the key
of

of the outer room, so that I could not even converse with her through the door. I was determined, however, to run all hazards ; and trying the keys of all the different doors on the story, I at length accomplished my purpose, and received the weeping Julia in my arms. Her joy at seeing me was, however, repressed by the terror occasioned by the mode by which I had obtained entrance ; but I besought her to quiet those alarms, and assured her I would take every thing upon myself. The dear girl informed me that her father was gone to fetch his friend, whose name she told me was Ireby, and that he continued resolute in his determination that she should become his wife ; her own resolution, however, she assured me was not to be shaken, and that nothing should ever force her to pronounce the odious vows required of her. Indeed she affirmed that she felt fortitude sufficient to protest against so compulsory a measure even at the foot of the altar, if they carried their violence so far as to drag her thither ; and I am persuaded that
she

she would execute this purpose, should she be driven to so horrible an extremity. I conjured her to take advantage of the opportunity thus providentially offered to her, and to fly from so odious a tyranny, offering to exchange clothes with her, and thus to enable her to effect her escape without suspicion; as the strange servants who were in the house had scarcely ever seen her face. She pressed my hand tenderly, and said, 'Ah! Caroline, I am wretched, but shall I become guilty?' and

'And of what offence, dearest Julia,' said I, 'would this make you guilty? surely it is lawful in every oppressed being to fly from the tyrant who oppresses it; and in ten days, my beloved friend, you will have a legal claim to quit this scene of suffering.'

"Alas! I had touched a string that vibrated too keenly on her heart. She threw herself in an agony of grief into my arms.

'Oh Caroline!' said she, in a voice inarticulate from her sobs, 'in ten days I was to have been——' She could not finish the sentence. 'Dearest, dearest Julia,' cried I,

at

‘at least shorten the period of extreme suffering. Lose no time,’ said I, beginning to prepare for exchanging our gowns and head dresses; but she faintly cried, ‘I am unequal to the effort;’ and sunk down insensible on the sofa. In a few moments, however, she again unclosed her eyes, and on my pressing her to make the attempt, she said, in a firmer voice, ‘No, Caroline! it must not be done. Long unused to parental authority, I have ever felt it the most sacred claim of all our earthly duties; I have ever lamented that I have been precluded from fulfilling a duty I trusted would be so peculiarly pleasing to my heart, and now——’

‘Julia,’ said I, ‘you deceive yourself; no duty can authorize you to submit to such unjust tyranny, to expose yourself to such undeserved suffering; no parental authority can impose new vows.’

‘No,’ interrupted she, ‘the vows I have made, to belong only to one being, are registered in Heaven, and shall be preserved inviolate; they are as sacred an obligation

as if the rites of the church had sanctioned them; but further my free agency reaches not. To the cruel insults, to the terrifying rage of my father I must submit; if I leave him, I shall for ever hear his dreadful voice uttering curses on my devoted head. Caroline, I dare not encounter it.

“ Again I represented to her every argument I could devise, to induce her to quit the house. I know not even whether I had not succeeded in part, when the voice of Mr. Dalrymple, on the stairs, renewed all her trembling agitations, and put to flight every recollection but that of extreme terror. I exhorted her not to lose the conscious dignity of innocence, but to support with proper firmness the presence of her father. On this she recovered herself a little; but it is utterly impossible to describe the rage and surprise of Mr. Dalrymple on finding me with his daughter; question succeeded question, and oath followed oath with unintelligible rapidity, and scarcely could the man, who followed him into the room, prevent him from
beating

beating Julia, and turning me into the street. I absolutely refused to quit my friend, unless compelled by main force; and represented to him that no future opportunity could ever place us more at liberty than he had found us, when Julia certainly might have escaped had she not been restrained by a sense of duty and honour. His friend espoused my cause with a warmth that surprised me, and at length, he really succeeded in persuading Mr. Dalrymple to allow me to share Julia's confinement; he has, however, exacted from her several promises, which I am persuaded she will religiously observe; one is, to write no letters—the principal point which this clause was to gain, was, however, fully established by the oath she had already taken, to relinquish you entirely. I am suddenly interrupted, and must bid you hastily adieu.

C. WAVENEY.

LETTER.

LETTER II.

“ TO THE REV. MR. MELBOURNE.

May 5th.

“ I was so abruptly obliged to finish my last letter, dear Melbourne, that I fear you have suffered extremely from suspense. Alas ! my friend, could I have communicated better tidings, I would not thus long have delayed, but no hope yet breaks upon us ; Julia still, to my astonishment, preserves her health and her fortitude, though the interruption which forced me to close my last letter so suddenly, arose from her falling into successive fainting fits ; happily, however, she recovered from them, but the terrible altercations in which the intervening days have passed, have prevented my resuming my pen until now.

“ Mr. Ireby, you guessed of course, was the person who followed Mr. Dalrymple into the room. Imagine to yourself a tall gaunt figure, with a penetrating eye, and a voice of authority, apparently some years Mr. Dalrymple's senior ; and you have an

idea of the man proposed as a husband for Julia: yet, by some incomprehensible mode, this man, whom I cannot survey without shuddering, has obtained the completest dominion over the despot Dalrymple. It must be the strangest compact imaginable; for ungentlemanlike as is our newly recovered father, his friend is still more of a blackguard; he seems to have proceeded from among the lowest of the people, and it is wonderful how he could acquire this ascendancy over passions so ungovernable, and manners so rebellious as those of Dalrymple. But there never yet existed a disposition to tyranny without a counterbalance of meanness; there never yet was a despot who did not suffer under arbitrary government as tyrannical as that to which he made others bend: this Ireby, however, smooths his brow, and humanizes his voice, when he speaks to Julia, and seems to intercede with her father not to use violent and hasty measures. Hitherto Julia has inflexibly maintained her resolution to refuse all advances from Ireby; she persists in having
nothing

nothing to say to him, and declares openly that though she has sworn, and therefore will not wilfully counteract his will, she looks upon it as her inherent right to refuse any marriage that militates against her sacred prior vow. I should sink under the task, dearest Melbourne, were I to attempt to give you an idea of the mode in which the last days have passed; deafening vociferation, vehement argument, execrations, threats—all have been tried, and found wanting to turn for a moment the admirable steadiness of our dear Julia's soul; she protests that it would be the worst kind of perjury to give her hand to any man but yourself, and though she promises not to fulfil her vows to you, (unless, as she adds to me, any almost miracle should happen to reconcile her father to them) she will not violate them by contracting new engagements. Ireby affects moderation, and controuls the father more than I thought any human being could controul him; yet under the pretended calmness of the lover, I think I discern anger ill-concealed, a thirst

of vengeance which only wants power to shew itself, and a love of tyranny so easily contracted in the east. In his conversations with Julia he affects the most refined and generous sentiments, talks of the delight of bestowing happiness, and sometimes inspires her (whose eyes, blinded with tears, seek not to examine his odious countenance,) with a hope of making him really her friend; but the moment she hints that, he laments that he is bound to Mr. Dalrymple by the most sacred ties to fulfil the office of husband and guardian to his daughter, speaks in high terms of the passion which he feels for her, and to me, in a moment, proves the duplicity and unfeelingness of his character. Very few are the moments in which my beloved Julia can receive any consolation from the free communications of friendship, for we are seldom permitted to be alone together; yet there are times when she agonizes my whole soul by expressions of misery that seems to admit of no possibility of consolation. Oh Melbourne! dear, unhappy, beloved
Melbourne,

Melbourne, how do I pity you, and what would not I sacrifice for the power of changing your destiny ! Alas ! my friend, I fear it is impossible ; I have not yet suffered you to know our address, because I feared you would attempt some desperate action, which could only aggravate the miseries of our situation ; but I begin to be anxious to hear from you—to hear that you emulate the heroism of your Julia, that you do not sink under the pressure of your misfortunes, that you seek, in the performance of your useful and extensive duties, that consolation which you cannot hope for from even the known vicissitudes of human life ; for I think you have too well experienced the truth of Young's melancholy reflection—

“ Here teems with revolutions every hour,

“ And rarely for the better, or the best

“ More mortal than the common births of fate.”

“ I trust you will now respect the requests and entreaties of Julia, and not form any desperate plan which would, if any thing could,

could, render us still more miserable than we are;—if any future blessed change is in store for us, it will be brought about without your interference, and your utmost endeavours cannot forward it. In the hope that you will support your destiny with patience and resignation, I add to this letter the address to my lodgings, where I can receive a letter from you. I am really extremely anxious to hear of you; and to hear that you have exerted a manly fortitude, and preserved the dignity of your character, would give to the bosom of your Julia all the satisfaction it is now capable of feeling. Farewell, then, dearest Melbourne; be careful of yourself, and obey the requests of your Julia!

“ Yours’ affectionately,

“ C. WAVENEY.”

LETTER.

LETTER III.

" TO THE REV. MR. MELBOURNE.

May 10th.

" What can have happened to you, dearest Melbourne? I anxiously expected to have heard from you ere this, and am dreadfully apprehensive that some fatal accident has befallen you;—this is the third day on which I have most impatiently waited for a letter from you, and I have now scarcely time to repeat my request that you would write immediately. I have discovered, what was, until yesterday, a perfect mystery to me, the quarter from whence Mr. Dalrymple obtained his full and perfect knowledge of you and your connection with Julia; it seems it was from Mrs. Trebison, whom he visited, having learnt her abode without any difficulty; and it proved, I doubt not, the highest gratification to her malignity to snap the cords which had so nearly united you and Julia for life. Adieu, dearest

Melbourne! I have not another instant;
write instantly to

"Your affectionate

"CAROLINE WAVENEY."

LETTER IV.

"TO THE REV. MR. MELBOURNE."

May 12th.

"Still silent! Oh Melbourne! how can you have the cruelty to add thus to our distress? Alas! if you saw us, you would be convinced we could ill bear any addition; but I am barbarous to accuse you, when, alas! my very heart bleeds with the apprehension that you are at this moment a victim to your grief. Oh Heavens! you cannot—no, your soul is too exalted to have suffered despair so to overcome it as to entertain for a moment the horrible idea of ending your miseries by your own hand. Dearest Melbourne, by all that is dear to you, I conjure you write instantly, or let some friend

friend write; recollect our poignant anguish and, at least, relieve us from this dreadful suspense. Oh my friend! this day, the recollection of the purpose to which this day was appointed, agonizes our hearts.—

Ah Melbourne! perhaps you are now incapable of reflecting that this day was to have united you and Julia; till this fatal morning she has not dared to mention your name; but on her father's sarcastically wishing her joy, and saying, he supposed she would avail herself of her independence to quit him, and give herself to that beggarly wretch of a parson, she sunk in a flood of tears on my bosom, and pathetically whispered, 'Oh Caroline! what is become of that wretched young man—Oh Melbourne! where and what art thou!' However on her father's repeating his words with additional scurrility, adding, that his curses should follow her and her posterity, living and dying, she gained courage enough to say, 'You know, Sir, I have promised not to disobey this positive command.'—'And where,' cried the

wretch, trembling with rage, and absolutely shaking Julia with violence, 'where did you learn the logical difference between obeying and not disobeying. You won't obey my positive command to marry this gentleman.'

'I cannot, Sir,' replied Julia, 'it is impossible.'—'Means shall be found to make you,' bellowed her father.'—'No such means can be invented,' said Julia.—He struck her with great force, and she fell to the ground; the blood gushed from her temples, and I raised her senseless on the sofa;—at length she opened her eyes, and said, 'I believe you have killed me, but I thank you for it.'—'I had rather see you dead at my foot,' cried the monster, 'than any thing but the wife of Mr. Ireby.'—At this instant the man came in, and I said, 'Mr. Ireby, here is an accident which requires surgical assistance, pray send instantly;—the wretch really turned pale as Mr. Ireby demanded with a vehement tone how it had happened. 'For God's sake,' said I, 'make no enquiries, but hasten to send

send for assistance; the blood flows very fast.'
—But, dearest Melbourne, let me hasten to assure you that Julia is in no danger, though I strive to persuade her father she is. She again closed her eyes, and was insensible to every thing, and I expressed my fears for the consequences: we had not then seen the surgeon, and I was really alarmed; he only said, without the least sign of remorse, 'It would vex one to be hanged for such a thing.'
—I directly exclaimed, with more truth than prudence, 'If any thing could give me pleasure, in case the event should be fatal, it would be to see you at the gallows.'—I really think he would have beaten me also, had not Ireby at that moment entered with a surgeon, who examined and dressed the wound, and ordered his patient to bed. He told me as he was assisting me to lift her into the next room, that it was a wound of no consequence, and I took an opportunity to beg him to magnify its danger to the gentlemen. The surgeon seems an intelligent and a benevolent man, and complied with

my request: Ireby seems really alarmed, and treats Dalrymple with a severity which surprises as much as it pleases me. Mr. Dalrymple threatens me with expulsion, but Ireby declares I shall not go: this man has rather gained in my opinion within these last two days, yet sometimes I fear I am only a dupe to that hypocrisy of which, at the first glance, I discovered symptoms in his countenance. Julia is in a sweet and easy sleep;—she has no fever, and I trust will soon be perfectly recovered again; but her illness will allow her a little respite from the dreadful rages of her father, therefore we shall endeavour to prolong the appearance of it as long as possible. Ah! dear Melbourne, she has just awakened; and seeing I was writing, she said—

‘Your tears, my Caroline, inform me to whom you are writing; tell that dear unfortunate being that the heart of his Julia is wholly unchanged; yet perhaps you had better not tell him so, but let him believe—— Oh Caroline! Melbourne could not believe me capable of change.’ She was silent, and then said—

‘This

‘ This day, Oh ! had we but reached this day without——’ Here she burst into an agony of tears, and I trembled lest her agitation should make the blood stream again ; I besought her to compose herself, mingled my tears with her’s, and succeeded in restoring her spirits to their usual state. — She then said, ‘ I feel very faint ; if this blow should occasion my death, dearest Caroline, suffer not my father to be brought into trouble ; it will but have ended a little prematurely a life which must soon have fallen a sacrifice to my misery.’

‘ Dearest Julia,’ said I, ‘ you are in no danger, not in the least ; you shall live, my friend, and triumph over the afflictions that now oppress you.’

‘ Alas ! Caroline,’ replied she, ‘ I can only triumph over them in my death ; while I live, they will not lessen.’ — ‘ We cannot answer for the possibility of human events,’ said I, ‘ we know not what a day may bring forth.’ — ‘ My friend,’ said Julia, steadily, ‘ cease to flatter me with ideas which your
own

own reason knows are unfounded; rather assist me to support with patience evils undeserved indeed, but irremediable; even my father's death would not set me at liberty, and I am thankful it would not.—God forgive me! I might be tempted to wish for my father's death.

The idea shocked her, and she trembled excessively. I endeavoured to persuade her he might in time relent; but she could not for a long while recover the hurry of spirits into which she had thrown herself. After a long interval, however, I have succeeded in once more composing her, and I must now hasten to send my letter to you. For Heaven's sake, Melbourne, write;—write instantly, and relieve part of the apprehensions

Of your truly affectionate
C. WAVENEY.

LETTER

LETTER V.

May 13th.

"Another day has elapsed; and I hear nothing of you." Had I any means of finding messengers, I would not thus long have supported my suspense. Alas! Melbourne, I now dread most cruelly to hear some fatal intelligence; had you not fallen a victim to your despair, you must have written. I will add only that Julia is mending.

"C. WAVENEY."

LETTER VI.

"TO MISS WAVENEY.

May 14th.

"Yes, Caroline, I live! but I have been on the brink of the grave, from whence I wish never to have returned; yet this is impious, but my mind is weakened with my body. During a terrible fever my friends
have

have carefully secreted my letters, and this day I have first read the whole dreadful series. I thank you for your friendship—I entreat its continuance. If my reason holds, you shall hear again from the wretched

“MELBOURNE.”

LETTER VII.

“TO THE REV. MR. MELBOURNE.

May 15th.

“Thank Heaven, you still live! Ah Melbourne! your Julia thanks Heaven that you are still preserved, though she acknowledges to a most miserable lot; but she could not have survived you. The detestable wretch, her father, has some plan in agitation of which I am kept in entire ignorance; if I can develop it, I will exert my utmost endeavours to render it abortive. But fear not—no force shall separate me from Julia; I am of a persevering spirit, and will oppose any intention of that kind. Julia beseeches you

to

to give her a promise not to interfere. I am too much upon the watch to add more, than that she recovers rapidly, and that I am

"Your's sincerely,
"C. WAVENEY."

CHAP. XVIII.

DESPONDENCY.

"TO THE REV. MR. MELBOURNE.

May 16th.

"Most beloved Melbourne,

THOUGH the fatal oath has passed my lips never more to hold commerce with you without my father's consent; though you must feel how inviolable I shall ever esteem this oath, and how hopeless it leaves me, yet your silence on one important point obliges me

me to enforce Caroline's repeated requests, that you will make no active exertions on my account; passive fortitude is all that is left us, and I entreat you to answer favourably to Caroline this last supplication of

" JULIA."

" TO MISS WAVENEY.

May 17th.

" Yes, Caroline, receive my solemn, my sacred promise, to remain inactive;—the heart-breaking letter now before me, dictated by a passive firmness that drives me to despair, demands this assurance. I am yet too weak to write much. Alas! I dare not own with how much gloomy satisfaction I contemplate the ravages this illness has made on my frame. I view with composure, with hope, the debility over which medicine has no power.—Ah! how should it be able to reach a disease which has its source in the heart?—Assure—yes, receive my inviolable oath to obey those repeated requests you have conveyed

veyed to me ;—and on you, Caroline, dear and inestimable friend—on you I rely for constant intelligence.

“H. MELBOURNE.”

“TO THE REV. MR. MELBOURNE.”

May 18th.

“Alas! my dear unhappy Melbourne, the measure of your woes is now full,—your Julia has not the consolation of knowing your entire acquiescence in her wishes; yet let me not mislead you into a belief of her death; no, Melbourne, she yet lives to feel and know all the accumulated horrors of her situation. I told you a project was forming; it is executed, and with a degree of secrecy that has left me in ignorance of the manner in which it has been conducted. Mr. Dalrymple has carried off his daughter, and Ireby is gone with them. I am preparing to follow them, though by what clue to seek them I know not; they must have walked out of the house, as no carriage could have come to the door without my observing it; yet all their clothes and packages are removed,
and

and their absence seems to have been premeditated. I am interrupted.—

“ It was a fortunate interruption, dearest Melbourne ; for the task of seeking our Julia devolves now on one every way fitter to undertake it than I am. A very pleasing youth announced himself to me as the cousin of Julia, and the younger brother of Mrs. Trebison. I explained to him at large the terrible situation in which we now stood, for he seemed to deserve all my confidence ; he told me he had been seeking us for many days, but that he could find no clue to guide him to us ; as he had applied for intelligence to Mrs. Trebison, and she had never informed him that she had sent Mr. Dalrymple to Waveney Hall. This interesting young man seemed to feel the most lively affection for Julia, and instantly set out on the pursuit, though what benefit is to be derived from the success, I cannot imagine ; neither he, nor any power on earth will be able to drive Dalrymple from his implacability, nor to induce Julia to quit the situation in which she thinks duty

duty and propriety require her abode. The only possible advantage it can occasion, will be, to enable me to throw myself again in the way of my Julia, though I fear her father found me too troublesome an inmate not resolutely to prevent my again becoming such; yet my belief that our Julia derived some support from the consolations of friendship, would induce me to hazard a great deal. And now farewell, dear partner in affliction; you shall instantly share in all intelligence with

“ Your truly affectionate

“ C. WAVENEY.”

Several days elapsed before Melbourne received any further information, and passed in a state of torpid despondency, from which the most assiduous efforts of Lord Charlby could not rouse him. That kind and attentive friend informed Lord George Montague of his situation in a cursory manner, and Melbourne soon found himself furrounded by the society best calculated to restore his mind to its

its natural firmness, if any thing but a total revolution in his circumstances could have produced such an effect. Mr. Searle accompanied Lord George to Charlby, leaving to his own curate the whole care of the parish, while he devoted himself entirely to the double task of soothing the mind, and performing the duties of Melbourne. Melbourne felt and expressed the sincerest gratitude for these exertions of friendship, and lamented the utter impossibility that they could ever restore the shadow of peace to his deeply-wounded heart. He blamed himself for the total inertia in which he had consented to remain, and it required all the power which Mr. Searle from early habits possessed over his heart and affections, to reconcile him to that passive endurance of his situation which Julia so affectingly recommended to him, and which his own debilitated health rendered necessary. Ten or twelve days passed in this terrible despondency, when the sudden arrival of a stranger promised some change in their situation. A

et beam and professor of divinity and young

young man on horseback, who had apparently performed his journey with all possible dispatch, requested to speak to any one who could introduce him to Mr. Melbourne. Melbourne himself made an effort on this occasion, and impelled by a hope which he dared not indulge, enquired aloud if it was William Macartney. The youth heard the enquiry, and rushed into the room. To Melbourne's rapid demands if he had found Julia, he replied in the affirmative, and putting into his hand a packet from Miss Waveney, told him, that contained the intelligence at large, and more accurately detailed than he could give it, as he had merely staid at the house while Julia wrote to her friend; that she had briefly assured him her situation was become more tolerable, and requested him to recommend patience and submission to her friend. "I immediately hastened," added young Macartney, "to Miss Waveney, who as soon as she had perused the letter, indulged me with the opportunity of once more embracing Mr. Melbourne."

Melbourne

Melbourne returned, with a pensive gratitude, the ardent advances of William Macartney, and then putting the packet into Mr. Searle's hands, threw himself into a chair, and declared his inability to read it. It remained unopened for some time, till at length, with a gloomy despair, Melbourne took it from the table, tore it open, and read in the envelope the following lines from Caroline :—

“ Be thankful, dear Melbourne, for the alleviation of our Julia's sufferings ; and though her father is as implacable as ever towards you, and there seems as little hope as formerly of a successful end to your miseries, yet let the amended situation of our beloved friend impart some of that ease to your mind that it has to mine. I enclose you her own letter, as it is impossible to detail the intelligence it contains.

“ C. WAVENEY.”

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" THE ENCLOSURE TO MISS WAVENEY.

" By what extraordinary chance, dearest Caroline, William Macartney has been employed to seek me, or how he has been successful in the search, I neither know, nor have now time to enquire. He has fortunately arrived during the absence of my father, by which means I am enabled to send you a short account of the change in my situation. How our departure from London was planned or conducted, is yet a mystery to me, or by what means we got away unobserved by you. When I was summoned to the parlour to speak to my father, I found there a hat and cloak which I was commanded to put on in silence, and I was then led out of the house by him and Mr. Ireby; we reached this place the evening of the next day, and I must have been indebted to higher assistance than my own natural powers could have afforded me, to enable me to sustain the persecutions every day redoubled. My marriage to Mr. Ireby was the constant topic,

but I need not enlarge ; that persecution is for ever at an end—Mr. Ireby is dead. We had been here five days, when a slight indisposition, which had hung about him ever since our quitting London, rapidly increased, and terminated his existence. My father is shocked and softened by this event ; but he took early care to inform me that it would in no wise alter his disposition with respect to Melbourne ; that if ever I presumed— ; in short, Caroline, he repeated all the violence you have so often witnessed on that subject, therefore I am still without hope. In other respects, my situation is more supportable. I dare not write as much as I wish, for I tremble lest my father should meet with William, by whose kind artifices I have procured the long-denied indulgences of pen, ink, and paper ; yet, dearest Caroline, I entreat you write to that most lamented of beings all that is consolatory and soothing ; tell him that his Julia is unalterably his—Ah ! he needs not be told how wholly so. I tremble lest my father should
return ;

return; I close my letter precipitately; I cannot shew to William the real affection I feel for him. Explain to him, dear Caroline, the motives of my abrupt conduct; if ever I can find means of writing to you, I will;—but seek me not, my beloved friend; you would not be permitted to alleviate my misery by your presence, and the disappointment would only aggravate the poignancy of my feelings.—Alas, my Caroline! were my sufferings confined to myself, I think I have fortitude to support them; but my courage fails me when I think of you and of Melbourne.—Farewell—Oh, farewell!”

This letter occasioned Melbourne to shed many tears, and Mr. Searle trusted that it would give a turn to his feelings; but they seemed all absorbed in immitigable despair, and he appeared cold to the friendly advances of William Macartney, and deaf to all the consolations of reason and religion. William, who in the kind and successful exertions he had made for the discovery of

Julia, had passed many days he could but inconveniently spare from the prosecution of his studies, returned as speedily as possible to London; and Melbourne remained alone with Mr. Searle, with the exception of frequent visits from Lord Charlby, and from Lord George Montague, who saw with pain that a continued despondency threatened to obliterate all his feelings and all his talents. Miss Waveney's letters contained no intelligence to rouse him from this despair; she heard more frequently from Julia, who seemed to lose the poignancy of her sufferings in her endeavours to accommodate herself to her situation; and as she found it gradually become more tolerable, as her father's temper was less irritated, she had reasoned herself into something like composure, which was further assisted by a consciousness that she was fulfilling a very painful and difficult duty. But Melbourne could ill conform to a duty which seemed so grossly to violate all the obligations of veracity and sincerity; and seemed sometimes disposed to question the right

By which Julia absolved herself from her prior engagements to him, and to doubt whether any duty could justify her for plunging him into the depth of misery he then endured. Mr. Searle represented to him that Julia certainly felt a degree of misery equal to his own, and asked him, what either of them would feel, were they to persist in marrying, and thereby to draw down the threatened curses of Mr. Dalrymple. It seemed as if these two unfortunate victims to parental despotism, revered the authority of a father, the more for having been all their lives precluded from the blessing of one; for as Mr. Searle represented the horror of incurring the malediction of a parent, Melbourne melted into a flood of penitent tears, execrated his own selfish injustice, which could for a moment cease to reverence and admire the filial piety and unexampled fortitude of Julia. His affairs had remained in this situation some weeks, and though his melancholy was not lessened, his exertions were increased, and he listened with more

readiness to the voice of Friendship and Reason, when Lord George Montague paid him a visit, in very evident dejection of spirits, which not only obtained the sympathy of Melbourne, but even induced him to embrace his friend with unusual tenderness. He heard however, with pleasure, that Lady Susan and her little one were well, and demanding the cause of the bursting tear that even then trembled on Lord George's cheek, and of the mourning coat which he then first observed, he learnt with real concern the sudden death of young Shirley Montague, and the extreme dejection of his father and mother; his mother, in particular, the amiable Mrs. Montague, for whom Melbourne felt an uncommon degree of affectionate regard, it was feared would sink under the blow, and more particularly as Emily, the eldest daughter, gave symptoms of declining health. "You have often formerly heard me mention, dear Melbourne," said Lord George, "that an occasional depression of spirits would manifest itself in the

the

the countenance and manners of both those estimable people. I began to hope they had partly recovered that oppression, but the premature and lamented death of poor Shirley has brought it back in all its force; they are now at the Lodge, and Lady Susan and I are exerting all our powers of persuasion to induce them to make a little continental excursion; we are of opinion that so great a change of scene, and particularly a return to places where they had formerly resided with pleasure, would help to obliterate this very deep despondency into which this sudden and severe blow has thrown them."

Melbourne bowed assent to this remark; but his spirit, though sorely wounded by the sudden intelligence of Shirley's death, refused to lend itself long to any sorrows but its own; yet recalling to his mind every principle of philosophy and fortitude, with which he had ever strengthened his mind in idea against the evils of life, he strove to shew, at least, if he could not feel, a stronger interest in the affairs of those he loved. Lord George paid

him a long visit, and entreated him to accompany him back to the Lodge. The exertion seemed at first too stupendous for Melbourne's powers either of mind or body; but Lord George's proposal being strongly seconded by Mr. Searle, Melbourne at length yielded to the wishes of his friends, equally careless in what spot he devoted his soul to the sad remembrance of his Julia, and attended him to the Lodge, where he found the mournful family of Montague, in striving to sooth whose irreparable loss, he found some species of consolation for his own exquisite misery.

CHAP. XIX.

THE LAKE OF GENEVA.

THE sympathy of Melbourne was peculiarly gratifying to the afflicted mourners; they mingled their tears together, and often did he, to draw them from the contemplation of their own misfortune, give vent to the pent-up misery of his heart, and enlarge upon the circumstances of his disappointment. They listened to him with interest, and when, after much entreaty, it was at length arranged that they should make a little excursion for a few weeks, Mrs. Montague, who observed with peculiar kindness the various good qualities of Melbourne, proposed to him to join their party. Melbourne excused himself, as

thinking it impossible to neglect his parochial duties for so long a period, and also esteeming it wrong to fly from his own established employments, and put himself in a state of total inaction. He had talked much for some days of returning to Charlby, and resuming his former active mode of life; but at length the united reasoning and persuasions of Mr. Searle and all the Montagues prevailed, and they promising to confine their wanderings within the space of six weeks, at the end of which time they all declared they should wish to be at home; Melbourne arranged the business of his parish, took an affectionate leave of Lord and Lady Charlby, and rejoined the Montague family at the Grove, prepared to accompany them. They proposed visiting Switzerland, among whose romantic scenes and sublime features they judged they should find the most congenial amusement for their pre-occupied souls, and Melbourne rejoiced in the determination. He established a correspondence with Miss Waveney, who, in all her letters, continued
to

to speak of Julia's increasing composure of mind; and once more bade adieu to his native country. Their short voyage was sufficiently prosperous;—they landed at Bourdeaux, and travelled across the fertile provinces of Guienne, Auvergne, Lyonnais and Franche Comté, until they reached Lausanne, where they remained several days, and devoted a fortnight to Geneva, and the beautiful scenery on the banks of its Lake. Its stupendous mountains, its smooth and extensive waters reminded Melbourne of the days of his childhood when he rambled over the lovely and romantic environs of Linwood; and many a sigh did he heave to the memory of that day, which had fixed the colour of his whole future life. From Geneva, too, they visited the Glaciers, and made many pedestrian excursions through the wild and interesting country, by ways inaccessible to carriages or horses. The mode of amusement was so congenial to the simple and unadulterated taste of Melbourne, that he entered into these pursuits with more interest

than he had dared to hope any object could now excite in his woe-worn bosom ; and he assisted the wanderings of Emily with a grace and gentleness which endeared him to both Mr. and Mrs. Montague. Though they saw that Melbourne was handsome, and knew him to be pleasing and engaging, they were aware that Emily was informed of the state of his heart, and they felt secure that no danger could arise to their daughter from this free intercourse with a man whose whole soul was devoted to another. Indeed, Emily Montague had not been educated in a way to allow of any cause of alarm ; modest, sensible, and humble, she was yet too young to entertain naturally any thoughts of love, and her imagination had not been inflamed, nor her passions excited by any premature acquaintance with the sentimental jargon too prevalent among young girls. She had lived with, and been educated by her mother ; and her simple and unaffected manners, her ingenuous heart, and her unconscious graces, did honour to Mrs. Montague's care and assiduity.

Melbourne

Melbourne viewed with benevolent pleasure a mind so unfullied, and all his conversations with her tended to preserve and improve its unspotted purity. They were one day absent from the town on one of these pedestrian excursions, when, just as they came from behind a lofty mountain within view of the Lake of Geneva, Melbourne turned unusually pale; and the change of his countenance was remarked both by Mr. and Mrs. Montague—they feared he was ill, and earnestly enquired. A tear, an irrepressible tear stood in his eye, as he said, in answer to their kind solicitude—"Alas, no! nothing more than the oppression my heart always feels at the sight of this Lake; it recalls so strongly to my mind the scenes where my early youth was passed, and the marking events which there took place, that I cannot conquer the oppression that seizes me when I behold the Lake of Geneva."

"And where," said Mrs. Montague, "was your early youth passed?"

"At a small village in the north of England," replied Melbourne, "called Linwood."

"Linwood!" repeated Mrs. Montague, "did you know, though to be sure you did not, a person there of the name of Edmonds?"

"Oh heaven!" said Melbourne, his pale face becoming instantly like scarlet, "my infancy was spent with Mrs. Edmonds, and never did I know——" He hesitated, and

Mrs. Montague eagerly gazed at him. Mr. Montague took her arm, and would have led her home, but she wildly grasped Melbourne's hand, and said, "I must enquire."

"Reserve your enquiries, dearest Emmy," said Mr. Montague, "till we reach the hotel; you know this is a subject that agitates you too much."

"Mr. Montague," said she, earnestly, "my impatience will be too much for me, if I am not now allowed to ask."

"Here then," said Melbourne, whose heart, now beating with extraordinary sensations,

tions, yet forgot not its usual attentions, "here then, beneath these trees lie some timber; conduct Mrs. Montague hither—she may rest awhile."

The party repaired to the spot Melbourne had pointed out, and Mrs. Montague, almost fainting, placed herself on a large oak that had been felled, her husband tenderly supporting her, and Emily assiduously chafing her hands and temples.

"Melbourne," said Mr. Montague, "you must perceive that there is something more than usual in my wife's agitation; perhaps you can relieve it. Had Mrs. Edmonds a nurse child?"

Melbourne, trembling and cautious, replied only, "She had, Sir."

"And what became of him? It was a boy?" added Mr. Montague enquiring.

"It was," said Melbourne, "and I——"

"You are that boy," cried Mrs. Montague, "I know you are—I have seen it."

"Speak, Melbourne," said Mr. Montague, "is it so?"

"It is, Sir," cried Melbourne; "I am that boy."

Mrs.

Mrs. Montague was now, incapable of utterance. Mr. Montague and Emily earnestly assisted her, and Melbourne was torn by a thousand extraordinary sensations. Emily was the first who noticed him; she took him by the hand, she knelt before her mother, and Melbourne, under pretence of rubbing also that almost lifeless hand, knelt beside her. He gazed with a perturbed and enquiring eye on Mr. Montague, who viewed him with a look of scrutiny, which Melbourne sustained, though it surprised him.

"Did you imagine yourself Mrs. Edmonds's child?" questioned Mr. Montague.

"Till I left Linwood," replied Melbourne, "I knew no other mother."

"Have you known any other since?" exclaimed Mr. Montague.

"I have not, indeed," answered Melbourne; "that I was not the son of the Edmonds, I knew too well; but where else to look for my parents——; but see, Mrs. Montague revives."

"It

"It must be so," said Mrs. Montague, in broken accents, "it must be so—I feel it is so."

"My dearest Emily," replied her husband, "we have yet no proof; do not give way too readily to your feelings. Do you know, Melbourne, how you came to be put under Mrs. Edmonds's care?"

"I have learnt, but confusedly, Sir," replied Melbourne, "the circumstance about which you enquire; but I understand that in my earliest infancy I was consigned to her charge by a relation of her's who had been housekeeper in the family where Mrs. Edmonds had been nursery-maid."

"And the name of that family," said Mrs. Montague, breathless with agitation, "do you remember the name?"

"Recollect, my Emily," said Mr. Montague tenderly, "that even the name would be no proof."

"It would—it would be proof undeniable, dear boy, do you remember it?"

Melbourne.

Melbourne, still on his knees, could scarcely articulate the name of Meredith!

Mrs. Montague threw her arms round him, and fixing her earnest eyes on her husband, exclaimed, "Bless—acknowledge and bless him!"

"What am I to believe?" said Melbourne.

"Oh Mr. Montague!" cried Mrs. Montague, "can you still doubt?—Oh! sanction my ardour, and acknowledge him!"

"And if we should be wrong, my Emily," said he, "how cruelly should we lament such an error."

"We are, however, too cruel," said Mrs. Montague; "think of his feelings, Spencer, and—yes—you are our son—our first-born, long-lost son."

The object of this discovery trembled beneath sensations too exquisite to support; and looking in Mr. Montague's penetrating eye, there to read the sanction or the conclusion to his hopes, he saw in that intelligible index, paternal love and exquisite delight.

The

The young Emily who had been kneeling beside him, sharing the task of assisting her fainting parent, now sunk fainting herself into his arms, exclaiming, "Are you my brother?"

Mr. Montague raised his agitated children from the ground; and, folding his son to his bosom, Melbourne experienced for the first time the exquisite rapture of embracing a father."

"God be praised!" cried Mrs. Montague, "I see my eldest hope in his father's arms—Oh! most providentially restored to us, to comfort us for the loss of one child! Come to the bosom of thy mother, thou outcast from her maternal care. Oh my Henry!" whispered she, as she held him in her fond embrace, "how often has my heart agonized at my ignorance of thy fate—how often have I shuddered at the barbarity that tore thee from me, at the moment when a mother's care was most necessary to thee."

"Dearest Emily," cried Mr. Montague, "restrain these raptures. If, which God forbid—but if we should be mistaken?"

"It

"It is not possible—Oh Mr. Montague!" exclaimed the enraptured mother, "the emotions of my heart too well decide the truth. He is my own, my own Henry!"

Emily now advanced to claim her share in the joy of her family, and smiling with angelic tenderness on her mother, said, "Surely, mamma, my brother Melbourne is the image of papa, so like that picture of him that hangs in your room in London, that the first time I saw Mr. Melbourne, I could not help looking at him, the likeness struck me so forcibly; look, mamma, at the eye-brow, at the under-lip, and the very same bend in the nose;—dear brother," added she, kissing him very heartily, "I may look at you now, and not be ashamed of myself as I was at the Grove?"

"The resemblance," said Mr. Montague, smiling on his daughter, "had struck me, Emily, and it also struck my old friend Searle. I remember his hinting it to me at the Grove."

"Every thing proves it," said Mrs. Montague; "I will not admit of a doubt."

Henry

Henry now threw himself at the feet of Mr. and Mrs. Montague, and said, "Am I indeed to admit, to cherish this delightful hope? Have I, indeed, discovered my parents—and such parents!"

Mr. and Mrs. Montague embraced and blessed the kneeling youth, calling him by all the tenderest names parental affection could suggest, and expressing their happiness at finding him so worthy.

Happiness is rather to be felt than described. In the rapturous emotions of the moment, Henry forgot the misery he had lately endured; and when the sight of the Lake recalled Julia to his mind, the idea became associated with joyful hopes, for he trusted he had now a prospect of obtaining her father's consent. In short, not a single idea of discomfort was allowed to intrude during the remainder of the day on which this fortunate discovery was made, which it was determined should accelerate their return to England, as the chief reason for their excursion was by this happy event completely done away.

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

A WALK ON THE BANKS OF THE LAKE.

THE following morning Mr. Montague invited Henry to walk with him on the beautiful banks of the Lake of Geneva, meaning to inform him of some circumstances in his own family history that had occasioned so singular a separation between parents and children, and to obtain satisfaction with respect to some particulars about which he already felt great paternal anxiety.

“Henry,” said he, “my heart feels no difficulty to admit you to all the claims of a darling son, and I should, as ill as my wife, support any discovery we might now make
of

of any error in this business. My fondest wishes are too highly gratified in finding my son such a being as you are, for me to bear with any fortitude to look on a reverse to our hopes: we will not therefore consider this as a probability, yet, till every doubt is done away, which cannot be till we reach England, we will endeavour to remember that it is possible we may be mistaken. You must doubtless have wondered, why, if the name of Linwood so immediately recalled to my wife's mind the idea of Jenny Edmonds, and associated with it the likelihood of her having been entrusted with our lost babe—you must, I say, have wondered why we have never made any search about Linwood and its environs for such a being. The fact is, Melbourne, that until last night, the possibility of our child's being yet alive had never occurred to us; we had been so solemnly assured of its death, and we had received what we thought such undeniable proof that it had been nursed and buried at a village in Wales, that though we never ceased to regret its

loss,

loss, we had no idea of its ever being restored to us. To enable you to understand me, I must relate to you some parts of our early history, which I will do as briefly as possible, for I love not the task of narration; but it is fit and fair that you should know as much as we can inform you of the foundation on which your claim stands.

“ Your mother and I were very early attached to each other, and had just determined, young as we both were, to avow our affection to our parents, when Sir George Meredith’s affairs fell into disorder, and he sought to repair them by marrying Emily to a rich old nobleman, whom she would never have endured, even had not I possessed her love. As it was, the persecution we suffered drove us to desperation; and I finding the proposal coldly looked upon by my father, but not absolutely forbidden, prevailed on Emily to give me her hand clandestinely, at the very time that her mother thought her near yielding to the solicitations of her family. As we had, however, no means of forming any establishment,

establishment, for I was a younger brother, and had no independence at all, we agreed, with all the imprudence of youth, that Emily should continue to live in her father's house, till some favourable event should enable me to provide for her, while I trusted her securely, knowing that she was mine by every possible tie. In a short time, however, our stolen visits were discovered by their natural consequences, and all Emily's affirmations of her marriage were disbelieved; the old Earl withdrew himself, and the family in a rage quitted their abode, and retired into Wales, shutting Emily, like a guilty culprit, into a solitary apartment. Just at this crisis, I was absent on a journey which I had undertaken in the hope of obtaining an independent establishment from an uncle who had always professed great partiality for me, and when I returned unsuccessful from my visit, I found my wife carried off, and could meet with no vestiges by which to trace her. Young and romantic, I did not reflect that the retreat of a Baronet's family could not be so entirely

concealed,

VOL. III. N

concealed as to be impervious to industry, so instead of making judicious enquiries, I lost time in wandering about the country to seek the object of my affection. I found her at last, but so many weeks had elapsed during my search, that she had given birth to a son, whom her parents had instantly sent into banishment, and whom they swore she should never see again. The old housekeeper pretended herself in the interests of your mother, and told her she had taken the child to a peasant at the distance of forty miles from the place of their residence, where she was sure it would be well taken care of and nursed. At the period of my finding the retreat Sir George Meredith had chosen, my Emily was in the deepest distress for her child; the housekeeper, though she affected pity for her young mistress, could by no means be prevailed on to disclose the secret of its residence; that, she said, she was prevented from doing by repeated oaths which her master and mistress had obliged her to take, and as Sir George and his Lady seemed determined

determined to believe that Emily was not my wife, and would not allow me to make her so publicly, we were reduced to the necessity of eloping secretly by a number of contrivances too tedious to relate. I hastened with my wife to a place of security, and then at her earnest request returned into Wales, and made strict search and earnest enquiry after my boy : in vain I enquired, in vain I sought ; every peasant's cabin was crowded with children, and the circle of forty miles which I was to examine was too Herculean a labour for my finances to bear me through. I returned secretly to Sir George Meredith's, and announced my return to the housekeeper whom I credulously believed my friend. She made an opportunity of seeing me, and with many tears related to me the death of my son, and put into my hands a parcel of its clothes, the certificate of its baptism by the name of Henry, and a bill for its funeral expences, which I discharged, and making her a small present, more suitable to my means than to my gratitude, I

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N 2

returned

returned with the melancholy tale and its proofs to my Emily. The loss of her first-born has ever hung a weight upon her mind during all our subsequent prosperity ; she has in a manner reproached herself with its death, since her imprudence had rendered her liable to have it torn from her arms. Yet never have we suspected the least possibility of any deception, nor thought otherwise than that the child had been taken from us by the decrees of Providence, till yesterday, when we were talking over together the interesting circumstances of your history, which we had occasionally gathered from your conversation ; and the particularity of your total ignorance of your parents led my Emily to conjecture histories for you, till at length the idea struck her so forcibly, that she determined to question you, in order to discover whether it were possible you should be the infant whom we had so long lamented as dead. I persuaded her, however, to relinquish this idea, representing to her how improbable it was that our first-born should have survived, since no
one

one was apparently interested in concealing its life; and I had obtained her promise that she would not lead you into any ideas that would most probably only involve you in a disappointment too severe for your already wounded mind to support:—but your mention of Linwood operated on her ardent mind like a match on a train of gunpowder; all the corresponding ideas started at once into form and order; she well remembered Mrs. Edmonds, whose name was inseparably connected with that of the village. The sway and dominion which her father's housekeeper always had had over the mind of Jenny, partly from her relationship, and partly from her situation of authority in the family, seemed to point out the probability that she would have placed, with a person whose silence she could command, a being whose existence she wished to conceal; and my Emily remembered, that when she remarked to the old housekeeper, that she had been absent longer than was necessary for a journey of forty miles, she had answered,

that people could not travel in Wales with the expedition they could nearer London, and that she had remained long enough to see the babe comfortably settled; and my wife, who was too ill accurately to compute time, believed this account, and rested satisfied. Still, my dear Henry, a doubt rests on my mind with respect to the old housekeeper's motive for secreting my child, and for giving me a false account of its death. The baby-linen Emily perfectly remembered, and the bill for funeral expences was accurately dated as to time, and the place mentioned was certainly about forty miles from Sir George Meredith's residence. Sir George and Lady Meredith did not long survive these events, and what became of the housekeeper I never heard."

Melbourne then said, "I see, Sir, that too many doubts yet remain unsatisfied for me to admit perfect security into my heart; nor can I give any proofs one way or the other. Your excellent friend, Mr. Searle, to whom I owe that I am not wholly unworthy

of you, ever thought my chance of finding my parents too problematic to be very solicitous about instructing me accurately in the circumstances of my first arrival at Linwood; and since that moment, nothing has occurred to corroborate any surmise. I have never been enquired for, nor has the sum, which was promised to Mrs. Edmonds for my maintenance, ever been remitted; and every year taking from the chance of my ever being reclaimed, Mr. Searle has been more careful to guard me against imagining any romantic circumstances attending my origin, than to enable me to authenticate any discovery that might be made."

"Mr. Searle has judged rightly, my dear son," replied Mr. Montague, "for in that light I must consider you, unless I should be fully convinced of my mistake;—and looking upon you as my son, I entreat you to relate, as to an indulgent father, as many of the particulars of your unfortunate attachment as your fortitude will enable you to recal."

Melbourne, with many marks of emotion, recapitulated to Mr. Montague all the circumstances of his engagement with Julia, and its wretched conclusion; and when he had ended, Mr. Montague, who had listened with extreme interest, and who had shewn his sympathy by the most unequivocal tokens, grasping his hand, said:

“To me your Julia is totally unknown, except from your report, by which she appears amiable; but tell me, my son, and forgive the caution of a man who has seen enough of human nature sometimes to suspect even the fairest appearances—tell me whether there is not something that staggers even your credulity in Julia’s so instantly relinquishing you on the arrival of her father, and whether her sudden rich inheritance might not have some weight in influencing this determination.”

“My dear Sir,” replied Melbourne, “you do not know Julia, or you would, I am sure you would, be convinced that you wrong her. She has never, in the few letters I have seen since

since the fatal moment that separated us, she has never, in any way, alluded to the change in her fortune, or has it seemed more in her thoughts than if no such wealth existed; nor has Miss Waveney ever hinted at the possibility that a fortune of which, a few days before, we were all wholly ignorant, could ever make the smallest difference to either of us. I am thankful, indeed, Sir, I am, that Julia has never even assured me that she did not value it."

"If your Julia is what you think her, my Henry," said Mr. Montague, "and if the mystery of your birth being done away, we can vanquish Mr. Dalrymple's objections, I shall certainly promote your future happiness in all that depends on me; though I shall not expect much advantage to myself from calling Mr. Dalrymple brother!"

Henry could not but lament that the only point which could secure his felicity, should be attended with so considerable a drawback, as the incorporation of such a man as Mr. Dalrymple into the family; but Mr. Mon-

ague kindly assured him, that no consideration of that sort should in the smallest degree lessen his earnest endeavours to promote his success; and so very comfortable an assurance, joined to the delightful and soothing hope that he was now really with his parents, restored to him a degree of happiness he had long despaired of attaining."

CHAP. XXI.

"Each moment plays,

"Its little weapon in the narrower sphere

"Of sweet domestic comfort."

THE return to England was now rapidly promoted, as Mr. and Mrs. Montague were impatient to ascertain the truth of those surmises of which every hour rendered them more

more tenacious. Henry, even as a companion merely, had gained a great degree of their affection; they had admired his talents, esteemed his principles, been pleased with his manners, and loved his disposition. How much then must these favourable sentiments have been heightened, when they considered him as a long-lost son providentially restored to them; when to his habitual mildness and attentive manners, was added the elating idea that he was exerting himself to please his parents. They almost idolized him, and seemed anxious to crowd into the present moments all those precious testimonies of fondness of which he had hitherto been deprived, and which his heart so well knew how to appreciate. The simple and natural Emily declared she loved him no better now he was her brother, than she had done before; but only now she did not mind saying how much she did love him, calling him Mr. Melbourne every instant, for the sake of correcting herself, and giving him the endearing appellation of brother! Their journey

was as speedy as Mrs. Montague could support, and their voyage was prosperous; and Henry saw himself again on English ground, not now the unconnected, the isolated Melbourne, but, as he hoped and trusted, on the eve of being declared to belong to a respectable and noble family, heir to an affluent fortune, and born to support a name eminent for many ages. The energy of their feelings supported the whole party in the speed with which they travelled to Mayfield. Mr. Searle was immediately sent for to the Lodge, for Mr. Montague determined that the discovery should be first announced in his presence. The dubious wonder, and chastened joy with which he heard it, and the unalloyed delight with which Lord George received the information, the gentle welcome of Lady Susan, and the innocent caresses of Charlotte and Louisa Montague, who had remained at the Grove, may be better imagined than described. Mr. Searle cautioned his pupil against admitting too sanguine a hope of the truth of his present prospects; yet while he
uttered

uttered his cautions, joy glistened in his eyes, and quivered on his lips. He related with perfect accuracy Jane Edmonds's narrative of the first introduction of little Harry by her cousin the old housekeeper, dwelt with a doubtful pleasure on her repeated remarks of his early resemblance to her dear Miss Emmy, and particularly instanced the lock of hair, which Mrs. Montague recollected her having produced at their last parting. These circumstances fully corroborated, in Mrs. Montague's mind, all their former surmises, but it was deemed expedient to enquire after the old housekeeper, as from her alone the truth could be fully known; but as Mrs. Montague declared that, from as early a period as she could remember, Mrs. Gwynned was always called the old housekeeper, there was but little hope that she could now survive. Enquiries were made, but in vain; Lord George Montague went himself to Linwood to make enquiries after her of Mrs. Edmonds, but she could only say she believed she was dead, for she had

not heard of her many years ; “ never indeed,” said Jenny, “ since she brought me my little Harry,— Lord, Sir !” continued she, “ perhaps you may have met with my Harry ? Mayhap you know Melbourne ?” Lord George could not deny either that he knew Melbourne, or all that he knew of him ; and Mrs. Edmonds was nearly wild with joy when she understood that her Harry was turned out to be first cousin to a Lord. She called John Edmonds, to impart to him the delightful news ; and scarcely could Lord George effect his escape from the caresses and civilities of these good people. All personal enquiry, however, after dame Gwynned proving nugatory, the following advertisement was put in all the public papers :—

“ If Martha Gwynned, who in the year A. D. 17— lived housekeeper with Sir George Meredith, be still alive, and will leave notice of her address with the printer of this paper, she will hear of something very

very much to her advantage; or if she be no more, and have left any surviving friends, if they will leave their names and address with the printer of this paper, they will be entitled to a considerable reward."

Weeks and weeks passed on, and produced no reply to this advertisement, and Henry began to fear that it would be utterly impossible to establish his claim by the testimony of Martha Gwynned; and while any uncertainty on this head remained, he forbore to agitate the now nearly tranquillized spirits of his Julia by the surmises which, though almost admitted as realities by the family, he felt would still allow of some doubt;—and as his faithful friend, Miss Waveney, informed him, that Mr. Dalrymple still continued to express equal aversion to the connection, he feared that until the stigma on his birth was entirely cleared away, and he was no longer Melbourne, (though it would be impossible even then to change the profession to which Mr. Dalrymple professed an unbounded antipathy), he could form no reasonable hopes

of softening the heart of his Julia's inflexible father. His own amiable parents advised him to endeavour to detach his mind from dwelling on any hopes which depended on such very uncertain contingencies; and he began to fear that he was as far as ever removed from any prospect of obtaining the primary object of his wishes. When one day going the rounds of the printers, as he often did, to enquire whether any one had left any message in consequence of his advertisement, which in the hurry of business might easily have been forgotten to be sent to Mr. Montague's house, he met at the office of one of the Editor's, a lad who said that Martha Gwynned was still alive, but scarcely able to make herself understood. She was afflicted with the palsy, and in the workhouse of Llynw, a small obscure village in a very remote part of Wales. Melbourne immediately took the lad home with him, and made him repeat the substance of his information to Mr. and Mrs. Montague. Llynw was the very village where Martha Gwynned

Gwynned led them to suppose that their son had been nursed and buried; and Mr. Montague determined to accompany Henry down to identify the old woman, and to trace with extreme accuracy every vestige of his child, and every motive of the housekeeper's conduct.

Mrs. Montague saw them depart with the most excruciating anxiety; they promised to exert the greatest possible diligence, and flattered themselves that a week would be the utmost limits of their absence. They followed the post-roads till within about six miles of Llynw, and there leaving their carriage at a small hovel, dignified by the name of an inn, the lad, whom they had brought with them, offered to conduct them a very short way across the fields, which would save them, he said, near two miles. The way was rugged and dirty, but their eagerness overcame all obstacles; and in the evening of the fourth day from their departure from London, they found themselves by the bed-side of a palsied old woman, in a most deplorable workhouse, belonging to a poor

a poor parish in Wales. Here with objects of squalid wretchedness around him, children half-starved and almost entirely naked, gazing with impertinent wonder at the strange gentleman; smells the most offensive infesting the air, and sick people groaning on miserable flock-beds in every corner of the room, did Mr. Montague, with the most patient sweetness, endeavour by every stratagem to attract the old woman's attention: but all her senses seemed sunk in idiocy; and though she often attempted to speak, her words were absolutely unintelligible; and the matron of the house said, that even to her it was difficult to comprehend whether she wanted food or rest. In hopeless despondency Mr. Montague embraced poor Henry; in the utter annihilation of poor Martha's powers seemed for ever buried all possibility of identifying the facts; though Mr. Montague was fully convinced that the very wretched being before him was indeed the person he sought, by a remarkable scar over her left eye, which was still fully apparent, notwithstanding

notwithstanding the accumulated wrinkles of age, illness, and poverty. Mr. Montague left marks of his liberality with the matron of the house, and with the poor objects that had so terribly assailed his compassion, and returned dejected to his inn, affectionately assuring Henry that though all chance of ascertaining the truth was now over, he should lose no portion of his parental love. Poor Henry warmly thanked his father for this mark of tenderness; but drooping internally, felt that with the chance of certifying his birth, vanished all hope of obtaining Julia. They determined to return to Mrs. Montague with all possible expedition, and had ordered the horses to be put again to the chaise, when the master of the inn entered, with many bows, apologizing for the liberty, but the clergyman of the village begged to speak to the strange gentleman. "Indeed, Sir," said the man of the house, "he always begs to speak to all comers, and I fear he is but a troublesome person; but, poor man, he has a large family, and mayhap he has heard of your

gambog

Honour's

Honour's great goodness at the workhouse."

"Pray let him walk in," cried Mr. Montague, "a clergyman in poverty has a claim to the assistance of every liberal mind."

The landlord withdrew, and leaving the door open, a venerable white-headed man entered meanly clad, but with a countenance the most prepossessing; he said his intrusion required no apology, if he had been rightly informed that the gentleman came to see Martha Gwynned. They bowed in acquiescence, and the venerable man proceeded to acquaint them, that in a lucid interval many years back, Martha Gwynned, who had been in a state of idiocy ever since her paralytic stroke, had requested him to put down the following confession, which he read:—

"I, Martha Gwynned, do voluntarily affirm, that in the year 17—, I being then housekeeper in Sir George Meredith's family, did, by order of my master and mistress, take the new-born son of Miss Emily Meredith, by Spencer Montague, Esq. and after getting

getting it baptized at Llynw, by the Reverend Owen Aprice, I further carried it to a peasant's wife at a greater distance, and in the course of some weeks after, when we thought it could bear the journey, I carried it to my cousin Jane Edmonds, at Linwood, where I left it, and have never heard of it since. Sir George and Lady Meredith always believing that Miss Emily was not lawfully married, bound me by dreadful oaths never to own where it was placed, but the secret lies heavy on my mind, and Mr. Aprice has convinced me that I ought to reveal it.

“Witness my hand,
“MARTHA ✕ GWYNNED.”

“She was then as you see, Sir,” continued Mr. Aprice, “incapable of writing, but I took down the deposition, and have carefully reserved it ever since.”

Mr. Montague and his son, clasped in each other arms, heard not the good man's comments on the event, and the worthy pastor witnessed, with the sincerest joy, an event so affecting,

affecting, and to which he had so eminently contributed. Mr. Montague confined not to thanks and acknowledgments the expressions of his gratitude: the venerable old man received immediately a handsome present, and had a very comfortable annuity settled on him for life.

Every doubt being now for ever annihilated, Henry Montague admitted the most joyful hopes of obtaining the reward of his long and extreme sufferings in the possession of Julia Dalrymple; and Mr. Montague, though he strove to repress the sanguine expectations, could not but share in the hope. An alliance with a family eminent from its antiquity, affluent in all its branches, and noble in many, was too flattering an offer for an obscure individual like Mr. Dalrymple to refuse, and Mrs. Montague he was sure would concur in every plan that might tend to accelerate her son's happiness. These animating prospects beguiled the tediousness of the journey; and the extreme happiness Mrs. Montague expressed when she held her
undoubted

undoubted son to her bosom, almost made that son believe that no disappointment could now render him wholly unhappy. His friends, Lord George and Lord Charlby, shared in his newly-established felicity; and Howard, to whom he had written a full account of the various changes of his fortune, sent him a warmly affectionate answer, and expressed his firm belief that he would now experience no further drawbacks to that perfect content which his benevolent endeavours for the welfare of others so fully deserved. Howard informed him that he was now settled on the Rectory to which he had ever looked, and that Maria had been kindly received by his whole family, who all acknowledged her worth, and beheld her with affection. Poor Henry dropped a tear of impatience, as he reflected, that all those for whom he had interested himself, were now fully established in peace and satisfaction, while his own lot was yet undetermined, and fluctuating in all the vicissitudes of hope and fear. When he called to mind the unqualified and unfounded
aversion

aversion Mr. Dalrymple had expressed against him individually, and further, the inveterate prejudice with which he regarded his profession, he trembled, as he acknowledged in his letters to Miss Waverley, for the event of the application his father was determined speedily to make. He knew not by what avenue to gain entrance into a heart apparently so differently moulded from other men's, and feared that in the unworthy pride of immense wealth, Mr. Dalrymple would scorn the advantages of rank and connection with which Mr. Montague hoped to tempt him. To any personal happiness to Julia, particularly coming from a quarter to which he had so long been adverse, he was sure he would be wholly indifferent; and in short, after a variety of opinions on the subject, he closed his letter in a style of despondency, which drew from Miss Waverley the following reply:—

“ TO THE REV. MR. MONTAGUE, CHARLBY.

“ I cannot but approve; dear Henry, of the perseverance with which you close the avenues of your heart to every deluding attempt of the flatterer, Hope. I will not say, I congratulate you on your late fortunate discovery; that would be to insult an attachment which can allow nothing to be fortunate but what promotes its own ultimate success. Whether that is likely to be forwarded by your splendid rank in life, I am unable to conjecture; the wayward mind of Mr. Dalrymple may take it either as an offence or a gratification to his pride, or he may fancy it the highest triumph to spurn offers which may be made by those who might think themselves his superiors. A being who has never allowed pre-eminence to any thing but wealth, may be determined to assert such superiority; and I must say, I think your most promising hope of success arises from the languid state of his health; though even from Julia's cautious and dutiful letters, I think I can plainly

see that the irascibility of his temper is not lessened in proportion as his frame is debilitated. She has been his assiduous and tender nurse, and I fear, has had a great deal to endure; she never utters a complaint, duly respecting her filial duties, even to me who so well knew the strange and unfatherly character of Mr. Dalrymple. She thanks me for the self-denial I have practised in refraining from presenting myself before her father, and expresses herself highly obliged by your forbearance of any violent measures; she knows of your foreign excursion, and hoped it would benefit your spirits; and of its happy consequences, she shall soon receive the circumstantial detail. Her letters breathe a spirit of placability and resignation, perfectly consistent with the dignified and amiable character she has ever preserved. We, who know her, dear Melbourne, know how exquisite is her sensibility, and yet we know how completely she has ever kept it in due subordination to her reason; her irreproachable, her exemplary conduct through so many arduous trials,

trials, in which her excellent judgment has ever conducted her warm and feeling heart, must ever hold her forth to those who have hearts and minds to comprehend her worth, as a pattern of every virtue. But to what purpose do I thus enlarge on her perfections to you, my unfortunate friend, to whom every reflection on them only serves to shew the extent of your loss, and who are so fully sensible of them. Forgive me, dear Henry, and rest assured of the friendship and sympathy of your's affectionately,

"CAROLINE WAVENEY."

This letter, which bore such ample testimony to the varied excellencies of his Julia, Henry shewed to his father, who determined instantly to make an effort for rendering so well-founded and so constant a passion happy. Mr. Montague was actually writing a letter explanatory of the various circumstances, which he hoped would induce Mr. Dalrymple to retract his cruel prohibitions, when his son received by an especial messenger a large

and important packet, the contents of which, if they tended to raise his hopes with respect to the father of Julia, had no less tendency to depress them with respect to his own.

The packet was from William Macartney, who had been employed by a person newly arrived from India, to arrange and elucidate certain facts relative to an inheritance to which the said person laid claim, and which he affirmed were unjustly detained from him by means of a false will, to which he declared the late Ireby accessory, and Dalrymple principal. William Macartney, young and ardent, immediately conjectured that this discovery might be of service to his friend; he therefore sent him some important papers, first to corroborate his own opinion by his friend's judgment; and if Montague thought the proof of Dalrymple's and Ireby's guilt decisive, William Macartney proposed to go down to his unworthy uncle's, to offer him two alternatives, either to stand the trial at law, which he felt he could convince him would end in his conviction and execution,

or

or to give up the inheritance, and consent to the immediate union of Henry and Julia, the only condition on which William would undertake to persuade the injured party to waive the formal retribution which would be awarded to him by the law of the land.

Montague felt what an important hold he thus obtained over Dalrymple, but he felt also how difficult it would be for his own father, a man of family and unblemished honour, not to withdraw his consent to admit of an alliance, not merely with obscure vulgarity, but with atrocious guilt. His perplexities seemed to redouble, and he considered with extreme agitation the various papers, which seemed to establish beyond a doubt the nefarious combination between Dalrymple and Ireby. To trace the steps of villany is always a painful employment, and Henry felt it peculiarly so, as the proofs of infamy rose stronger to his view, seeming for ever to preclude the possibility of his father's so humiliating himself. The motive of Mr. Dalrymple's submissive attachment

to Ireby was now developed ; they had each other's lives equally in their power, but Ireby had acquired that ascendant which a cool dispassionate villain will always obtain over a vehement and irascible one. Ireby, therefore, had artfully fenced himself under the shade of Dalrymple's more atrocious iniquity ; and persuading him that he could at any time conduct him to the gallows, while he himself was secure from the lash of the law, he had gained a despotic power over the mind of Dalrymple, and indeed had artfully contrived to enjoy the whole benefit, and to avoid the merited punishment of their mutual guilt. Ireby, however, was emancipated by his sudden death from even the obloquy which would have been attached to his name—an obloquy which he would have despised, could he have retained, the benefits which it had purchased.

Henry was ruminating in agitated despair on the multifarious papers his friend had transmitted to him, and had not even decided whether he dared venture to unfold so iniquitous

iniquitous a proceeding to his father, when that kind and benevolent parent entered with the letter he had been writing to Mr. Dalrymple, to see whether it met with his son's approbation. Henry, overwhelmed with his new perplexities, could not banish the traces of emotion from his expressive countenance; and Mr. Montague enquired, with the tenderest concern, what could have happened to overcloud the sunshine of his morning hopes. Henry pointed to the papers that overspread the table, and sinking at his father's feet, said in a voice scarcely articulate—

“ Alas ! my dear Sir, I renounce for ever my ill-founded hopes ; I feel how impossible it is, that the important obstacle those papers contain can ever be got over, and I never will suffer even the firmest, the fondest affection of which a human heart is capable, to be the means of involving parents such as mine in an alliance with depravity and infamy.”

The effort was over, and Henry's assumed fortitude forsook him ; he sunk wholly on the

the ground, and lost in insensibility the consciousness of his accumulated sufferings. Mr. Montague had heard enough to be convinced that the papers on the table contained the solution of this alarming mystery; and impatient to comprehend it, called assistance to his son, and hastily overlooked the papers. He was sufficiently master of the subject when Henry unclosed his eyes, fully to sympathize in the agony still impressed on his features; and clasping his son to his bosom, and dismissing the attendants, he said to him, "Compose your agitated spirits, my son; I yet scarcely comprehend the proofs of this infernal roguery, but I will consider it most attentively, and also your friend Macartney's sanguine scheme; your excellent mother too, shall assist my deliberations, and if it should be found impossible to surmount these new obstacles, my Henry's filial piety must console him for his unmerited disappointments. The sacrifice you have voluntarily made, my son, of your best affections to the honour of your family, demands my warmest acknowledgments;

ledgments; and if that jealous honour will admit of any mode whereby your felicity may be secured, your father is ready to emulate your generosity, and to make every personal sacrifice for the sake of a son so dear."

Grateful for this kindness, Henry shed a torrent of affectionate tears, and besought his father to deliberate and decide quickly. "My fate," said he, "is now in your hands, for there can be no doubt but that Mr. Dalrymple might now be compelled to listen to terms. Yet, my father, believe that however you decide, your obedient son will submit to your judgment, and rejoice that in so delicate a case, the ultimate determination did not rest with him."

Mr. Montague again embraced his son, and gathering together the papers, carried them to the apartment of his wife.

CHAP. XXII.

AND LAST.

HENRY Montague awaited in a kind of stupid suspense the deliberations of his parents : unable to combine reasons or circumstances, he felt as if the powers of his mind were deserting him, and he ruminated with idiot wildness on the bewildering circumstances that oppressed him. Ideas floated in his brain, and made no impression on his faculties; as distressing phantoms bewilder the imagination in those restless dozes, when people are said to be neither awake nor asleep. From pity for his sufferings, Mr. and Mrs. Montague contracted their conference into as short a compass as possible, and

and the tender mother fought her trembling son, and informed him that his father was determined to do all that could be done ;— to go to London, to consult with William Macartney and the Plaintiff, and to see if it were possible to come to an accommodation on William's plan, without bringing Dalrymple to public infamy ; and if the injured person would be satisfied with full reparation without the indelible disgrace of the delinquent, Mr. Montague determined to wave the delicacy of his own feelings, in order to secure the happiness of his son. Henry was wholly unable to express the fervour of his gratitude, and learnt with additional thankfulness, that his father was already departed for London. The days passed on in perpetual conjectures on the probable issue of this attempt, and hope and fear alternately predominated. Mrs. Montague endeavoured to prevent her son from dwelling too closely on the various conjectures he amused himself with forming, and sought to engage him with his friends, who all joined in her

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well-judged

well-judged endeavours to divert his mind from its too constant occupation; but it was all in vain, and the only circumstance that occurred to interest him, was a melancholy letter from Miss Waveney, who informed him that Julia sent him her warmest congratulations on the happy discovery so undeniably established; and indeed Caroline quoted Julia's own words, which Henry gazed on with a melancholy delight.

The passage quoted was as follows:—

“ Believe me, dear Caroline, my heart rejoices as much as it is now capable of doing, at the fortunate discovery which establishes our friend in a station of life his talents and his virtues are so calculated to adorn. For me, I feel myself so completely separated from him, that neither the hopes nor the fears this event suggests to you, have the smallest weight with me; it can in no wise influence my father's mind, whose aversion to him both personally and professionally is inveterate and unaccountable; a melancholy
peace

peace is all I can ever hope to attain in this world, since the power of voluntary forgetfulness is denied to mortals. He possesses it no more than I do. Ah! may his impetuous temper be equally softened to resignation, as is the wounded heart of your

“ JULIA.”

This passage he read and re-read with a pertinacity of attention that communicated the despondency of Julia to his own heart; though he was conscious that she knew not of the recent events which had so totally altered their prospects. For news from London he now waited without impatience, for every hour's delay convinced him he had little to hope from any efforts that might be made.

A single shock, however violent, as he said in a letter to Miss Waveney, (with whom he found a melancholy pleasure in corresponding, as it was, in effect, corresponding through her medium with Julia), the mind would easily recover, and could even seek with increased elasticity the relief of anticipation,
and

and the stimulus of exertion; but repeated disappointments, like the successive gales of Autumn, shake the last blossoms of hope from the soul, and deprive it of the vigour necessary to impel it to energy.—In her reply, Caroline chid him for his despondency, and told him, she had rather hoped, from the natural firmness of his mind, fortified as it had been by the lessons of philosophy, that he would have resembled the oak, whose russet leaves were not to be dislodged by the rudest gales of Winter, but kept their station till they were pushed aside by the tender buds and renovated verdure of the Spring. “Such,” added she, “my friend, I even now prophesy will be your fate; even now you cherish a faint and fading hope, which will quickly, I trust, give way to a blissful security of felicity, and the cheerfulness and vigour of your mind shall again shine forth with renewed and brightened lustre.”

Henry shed a tear over the prophetic words which he dared not believe, though
his

his affectionate mother corroborated them with the most enlivening and cheering anticipation. Day after day passed slowly away, and every revolution of the hours took from him a degree of confidence which he knew not he had possessed, till he experienced its loss. At last, on the tenth day, Mr. Montague returned, and said, that after much legal deliberation and much irritating consultation, the plaintiff had agreed to relinquish the prosecution on condition of a full and perfect renumeration of the original bequest, and all arrears of interest; but would by no means consent to abandon the power of holding a future public investigation *in terrorem* over the head of the delinquent. Mortified at a clause which might, at any period, involve the family in all the horrors of public disgrace, no motive but his son's entire happiness could have been sufficiently powerful with Mr. Montague to induce him to proceed further in so humiliating a business; but impelled by the tenderest paternal affection, heightened by a previous well-

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founded esteem, he had now come to Charlby, in order to take Henry with him to the retreat where Mr. Dalrymple had immured his daughter from the sight of every human being that could give her comfort or support.

To that unhappy abode of irritated vice and suffering innocence they now journied together. Henry exerted himself to appear grateful for the very painful sacrifices his father was making for him; and trembled lest even those sacrifices should fail of success. When they reached the place, Henry remained alone at the inn, while his father went to the house of Mr. Dalrymple; nor did his suspense continue long. Mr. Montague returned enraged, and told his son there was nothing to be done with so violent, so atrocious a villain. He had not seen Julia—he rejoiced that he had not; he should have been sorry to have had another motive to regret the unmanageableness of Mr. Dalrymple. It was late, yet Mr. Montague would have immediately ordered the horses, had not Henry entreated him to remain
where

where they were until the morning; and fortunate he thought himself in having made this request, for in the course of the evening a note was brought to Mr. Montague containing only the following words:—

“ If Mr. Montague is not already gone, perhaps he will have the goodness to repeat his visit in the morning.”

The note was written by Julia. Something had undoubtedly occurred, and Henry re-animating by the prospect of some change, went immediately to the house, for the purpose of enquiring of the servants if any material circumstance was known to them. He found the house in confusion; Mr. Dalrymple being suddenly taken ill, and carried to bed. He asked if he might be permitted to speak to Julia, but learnt that she would not quit her father's bed-side.—He then sent up on a slip of paper the following words:—

“ I am

“ I am once more under the same roof with you ; honour me with some explanation and some directions.”

The servant, who carried it was absent some time, and when he returned, gave the following answer to Henry :—

“ In consequence of the agitation Mr. Montague’s visit excited, my father has broken a blood-vessel ; his passions are much calmed, and he sees the probable event with an earnest desire to fulfil his duty. If it were not presuming too much, perhaps a great point might be gained if Mr. Montague would call again this evening. My father is yet unapprized of Mr. Montague’s late discovery of his son.”

With this cautious note Henry flew back to his father, who after a short struggle, accompanied him back to the house, and was soon introduced to the bed-side of the
alarmed

alarmed Mr. Dalrymple. Henry remained at the door of the apartment, and heard that voice, which had hitherto only growled in fullness, or stormed in rage, now whining in supplication, and faltering with distress. The apprehended approach of death had placed the enormity of his conduct in the proper point of view; and he readily consented to do all that was required of him, even to the bestowing the hand of his daughter on the very parson he had so cruelly despised and insulted. Mean and despicable wretch! who gave up to the first emotions of unmanly fear those very points which honour, affection, and generosity demanded in vain. Henry heard with exquisite rapture the confirmation of his long fluctuating hopes, and gently entering the room, gazed on the varying countenance of his Julia, who was regarding Mr. Montague with the warmest expression of admiration, veneration, and affection. Mr. Montague's eye first noticed the gliding form of Henry; and he said, in a voice of kindness to the quivering penitent,

" Now,

"Now, Mr. Dalrymple, confirm your promises, and sanction the union of my son and your daughter. This despised youth is my son—my only son; heir to an ample fortune, and connected nearly with nobility."

Dalrymple even now scowled malignantly on Henry, but muttered with affected softness, "Yes, I confirm their union;" and Mr. Montague uniting their hands, embraced them both, and wept his blessing over them. The sensations of Henry, on feeling the yielding form of his Julia clasped with himself to his father's bosom—on hearing their happiness confirmed by both their parents, bid defiance to language, and Julia forcibly, though modestly, expressed her gratitude for the generous condescension and successful efforts of Mr. Montague.

The whole of Dalrymple's possessions were unequal to the demand made against him, and most of the arrears of interest fell on Mr. Montague to discharge. Pecuniary difficulties, however, he determined should not impede that happiness at length established,
and

and when all these matters were duly arranged, Julia became the wife of Henry Montague. Mr. Dalrymple survived their marriage but a few months ; yet, in that short period, finding himself deprived of the immense wealth so unjustly obtained, and of which he had been so proud, and wholly dependant on the bounty of Mr. Montague even for subsistence, he became, if not really penitent, at least humbled sufficiently to avow his faults, and to receive the cordial pardon of his daughter and his son-in-law, whose virtuous affection, founded on so permanent a basis, and refined by so many trials, secured to them an increasing happiness, which was fully shared by the benevolent parents who had so kindly contributed to its establishment. It may be readily imagined that the old age of Mr. and Mrs. Edmonds was rendered comfortable, independent of labour ; and perhaps the modes of life of Mr. and Mrs. Trebison, and Mr. and Mrs. Macartney need no description ; they were those every day kind of people, who live as the world around them lives,

lives, struggling with pecuniary difficulties for the sake of unbounded dissipation, inattentive to each other, and careless of their offspring. George Macartney continued through life a mere negative character, neither virtuous nor vicious, but ever inclining to the habits of his last associates. William Macartney pursued his profession with that attention it requires, and with the most unblemished integrity, while the principal objects of our concern continued through life to enjoy all the happiness which unabating affection and unimpeachable virtue can bestow.

FINIS.



Lately was published,
THE DEMOCRAT,
IN TWO VOLUMES, 12MO.
Price 7s. sewed.

We have seen lately but few productions under this title possessed of qualities to rescue them from that oblivion to which the majority of their species is daily hastening. The Democrat, attributed to Mr Pye, small as it is, belongs undoubtedly to the excepted few. Its scanty pages, and thin small volumes, contain more real humour, and just satire, than are found in wading through many sheets of the ordinary manufacture. It is a pity that the writer abridged our amusement by becoming so soon weary of his own.

BRITISH CRITIC, January 1796.

Lately was published,
THE MYSTERY
OF THE
BLACK TOWER,
IN TWO VOLUMES, 12MO.

Price 7s. sewed.

It appears essential to romance, that the scene it describes should either be remote from the times in which we live, or the people with whom we converse. The first of these rules has been obeyed by Mr. Palmer, and he has thrown his scenery back into the reign of Edward the Third—an æra of chivalry and warlike enterprise perfectly favourable to his design. His conception of the subject is, in other respects, sufficiently just; and by the introduction of a facetious Welch Squire, he has enlivened the solemnity of his graver scenes with occasional flashes of humour.

The romance is certainly executed with ability, and discovers such talents for that species of composition, as may be said to merit the protection of the public.

BRITISH CRITIC, October 1797.



